DAILY NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

THE TIMES

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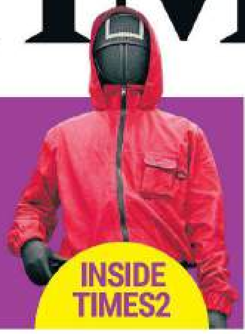
BBC versus Netflix
Battle of the screens



INSIDE TIMES2

Holy homes
The great church sell-off
Bricks & Mortar

French police criticised as four boat migrants die in Channel

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

Senior Border Force officers have expressed frustration at the inconsistent approach taken by the French police to combat migrant crossings after the busiest day in the Channel this year.

A total of 752 migrants crossed in nine boats on Wednesday and four migrants later died trying to make the journey overnight, in the latest sign of how the crossings are becoming increasingly dangerous.

The criminal gangs organising the crossings are also growing more violent, Border Force insiders warned, after an automatic firearm was found in one of the migrant camps last week.

"There is a regular drumbeat of firearms being found," a Border Force source said. "They're used to facilitate the smugglers' activities — controlling patches, making sure they keep the spaces where they launch the dinghies and for enforcing protection."

One of the four deaths occurred on the same beach where The Times had earlier witnessed gendarmes watching as migrants rushed to board an overloaded dinghy. The police did not intervene even after it later became grounded on the sand, insisting that they do not have permission to enter the water. Only officers from an elite unit trained in riot and crowd-control tactics have the authority to intercept boats in the water.

However, the gendarmes took a different approach after a dinghy ran aground in similar circumstances on the same beach later that day when they entered the water to intervene.

There were also several occasions last year when the gendarmes entered the water to slash the inflatable tubes of the boats to prevent crossings.

A senior Border Force source said gendarmes appeared to be willing to break their orders to enter the water in

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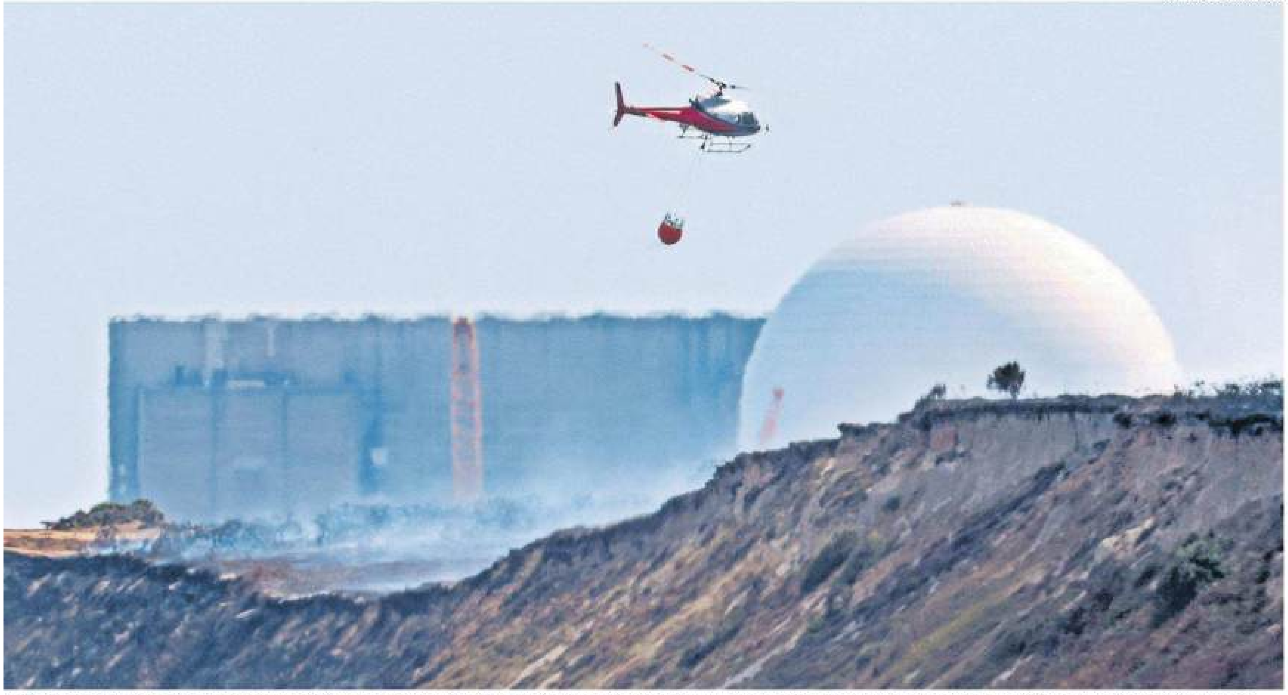
TOBY SHEPHEARD/REUTERS



A firefighting helicopter tackles the wildfire near Sizewell on the Suffolk coast yesterday. A source raised concerns about air-conditioning systems at the plant

Wildfire in Suffolk near nuclear plant

Lara Wildenberg, Ed Halford
Seren Hughes

A wildfire in Suffolk has spread to 150 hectares, prompting "concerns" at the nearby Sizewell B nuclear power station, and firefighters are expected to continue battling the blaze into tomorrow.

The fire started at Dunwich Heath near Leiston and has reached part of the nature reserve RSPB Minsmere. About 50 people staying at a holiday park and cottages were evacuated on Wednesday night.

A source who is familiar with operations at Sizewell B said there were "concerns" at the plant that ventilation and air-conditioning systems could be affected. EDF, which runs the power station, said the wildfire was "not affecting operations".

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service said yesterday that "changing wind conditions continue to affect the direction and behaviour of the fire, making it difficult to predict how it may spread".

Full report, pages 4-5

Uefa backs World Cup boycott

● European sides won't play if investment plan goes ahead ● International football is not for sale, Gianni Infantino told

Martyn Ziegler Chief Sports Reporter

European football's 55 member associations voted to boycott World Cups yesterday, sending a powerful message to Gianni Infantino and Fifa over plans to sell stakes in its competitions to private investors.

Uefa convened a virtual emergency meeting to address the controversial sell-off proposal — revealed exclusively by The Times on Tuesday — which has provoked a furious backlash across the sport. Member associations including England unanimously resolved to boycott every Fifa competition, spanning the men's, women's and youth World Cups. It is the first time that an entire confederation has voted to boycott big Fifa tournaments.

In a statement released after the meeting, Uefa said that its members "unanimously and unequivocally reject Fifa's proposal to transfer ownership interests in the World Cup and other Fifa competitions to private investors". It added: "The World Cup is not for sale. This is not a 'democratic decision' but governance by intimidation — an act of coercion unworthy of an institution entrusted with the stewardship of the global game."

In another blow to Infantino, the Concacaf organisation, representing 41 countries across North and Central America and the Caribbean, including the US, said after a meeting that it unanimously rejected Fifa's proposal.

The FA confirmed that it stood "shoulder to shoulder" with its European peers. Lisa Nandy, the culture secretary, threw the government's weight behind the boycott. "This is a principled decision that we strongly support," she said. "Football belongs to the fans, not billionaire investors. Enough is enough. It's time to take a stand to protect our game."

Representatives from more than 40 federations, including the FA, spoke during the session. An insider reported "total unanimity" and widespread anger over their treatment by Fifa, as well as questions about why the Zurich-based organisation's existing financial reserves were not being used for global development instead.

Members made clear that they believed the future of international football was on the line.

Infantino's plan would result in a group of investors controlling the commercial interests of Fifa's top men's and women's competitions. The boycott would damage his ambitions as private equity funds would face buying into a tournament deprived of the world's leading teams and players.

The boycott also casts uncertainty over upcoming international fixtures. The Women's Under-20 World Cup is due to start on September 5 in Poland, featuring six European teams, and European qualifying play-offs for the 2027 Women's World Cup are scheduled for October 9. England are set to play their first leg against Greece on that date. Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are also scheduled to feature.

Sheikh Salman Bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, head of the Asian Football Confederation, wrote to his 47 member nations, saying: "The AFC is deeply concerned that Fifa's unilateral actions appear to undermine the very foundations of continental football, which are based on solidarity, co-operation and transparency."

World Cup for sale, pages 60-64

Today's highlights

10.40am **Emma Roberts**, aka Mandy Burnham
2.05pm **Richard Parker**, Labour mayor for the West Midlands
2.50pm **Joanna MacGregor**, right, chief of strategy and UN affairs at the United Nations climate change body
5.50pm **James Martin**, YouTuber who drove from Oxford to Ukraine
7.35pm The economist **Professor Trevor Williams** on why millionaires are leaving the UK

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TODAY'S EDITION

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Tatler reveals its list of the best-dressed Brits
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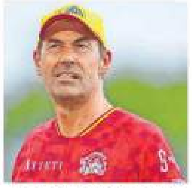

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Mike Atherton on England's new Test coach
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The provost tackling Oxbridge's 'handsy' men
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Are Infantino's plans to sell the World Cup doomed?

The Story

Gianni Infantino, the Fifa president, wants to monetise and Americanise football by selling off the World Cup. In response, Uefa has threatened to boycott the tournament. So what is Infantino thinking? And what does Donald Trump have to do with it?

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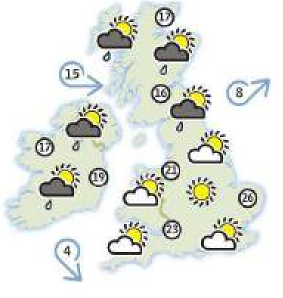
THE WEATHER



Warm and mostly dry in England and Wales. Showers in Scotland and Ireland. **Full forecast, page 55**

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Bank keeps interest rates on hold but warns of future rises

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

The Bank of England kept interest rates unchanged for the fifth meeting in a row yesterday but warned a prolonged conflict in the Middle East that keeps oil and gas prices higher for longer could trigger rate rises.

The nine members of the monetary policy committee (MPC), who meet every six weeks to set the base rate, voted 6–3 in favour of keeping rates unchanged at 3.75 per cent, where they have stood since December.

Inflation is on course to stay above 3 per cent for the rest of the year, the central bank predicted, owing to higher energy prices associated with the conflict in the Middle East.

Economic growth is expected to flatline in the three months to September and total 1.1 per cent across the whole of 2026. Unemployment is on track to rise to 5.1 per cent from its 4.9 per cent level.

Although the central bank said the economy had withstood the impact of the Gulf conflict better than it expected compared with its forecast in April, it conceded its forthcoming interest rate decisions would depend almost entirely on how long fighting lasted. Similarly, rate cuts could be forthcoming if the US and Iran reached a lasting peace soon, pushing down global energy prices.

Latest data from the Office for National Statistics showed inflation dipped to 2.6 per cent in June from 2.8 per cent in May, lower than the central bank anticipated.

Andrew Bailey, the Bank's governor, who voted to leave rates unchanged, said: "The conflict in the Middle East continues to mean high and volatile energy prices. That will cause inflation to rise again later this year. Our job is to make sure any increase in inflation is temporary and comes back to our 2 per cent target."

An early policy blitz announced by Andy Burnham to tackle the cost of living, including the removal of VAT from electricity bills from October and capping most single bus fares at £2, would reduce inflation by 0.1 percentage points, the Bank said.

Since the start of the conflict, which is now in its sixth month, government borrowing costs globally have risen sharply as investors fret over higher inflation. The Bank argues it does not need to tighten policy right now because these higher bond yields will automatically cool the economy.

Short-term UK government borrowing costs fell sharply after the announcement, indicating markets believe the Bank will hold off from raising rates this year. The yield on the 2-year UK bond dropped by 0.11 percentage points to 4.34 per cent and on the benchmark ten-year bond it fell by 0.04 percentage points to below 5 per cent.

The pound rose by 0.56 per cent against the dollar to $1.34. London's FTSE 100 rose by 0.25 per cent.

Three members of the MPC — Huw Pill, the central bank's chief economist, and the external panellists Catherine Mann and Megan Greene — wanted to increase rates to 4 per cent. Pill said a rate rise now would cut "through noise in commodity and asset price developments to offer a clear and unambiguous signal of our willingness and ability to address upside risks to inflation stemming from events in the Gulf".

Borrowing costs fall, page 33

Retiring boomers trigger surge in pension tax bills

Helena Kelly
Money News and Investigations Editor

Wealthy baby boomers are behind a record income tax haul of £30.1 billion on pension withdrawals in 2024-25, up 47 per cent on the £20.5 billion collected in 2021-22.

Experts said the increase had been driven by the number of baby boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964, beginning to retire and take income from their pensions via annuities, drawdown — or even in one lump sum.

The figures released by HM Revenue & Customs also include retiring public sector workers starting to take an income from defined benefit schemes.

This generation has benefited from a big rise in property wealth and is more likely to be on valuable defined benefit pension schemes, which pay a guaranteed income in retirement. Most companies now offer only defined contribution schemes, where your income in retirement depends on how much you have paid in and how those investments have performed.

Frozen tax allowances have also contributed to the hefty tax bill, as pensioners have been dragged into paying higher rates of tax.

David Little from the investment firm Evelyn Partners said the figures were "growing rapidly as the population ages and the 'boomer' generation retires". He added: "The increase reflects a growing retired population, larger pension payments and withdrawals after several years of inflation, and frozen tax allowances.

"Poorly timed full encashments will also contribute, and there is some evidence that an increasing number of small pots are being withdrawn in full, despite the tax consequences."

From next year the state pension is due to collide with the tax-free personal allowance, meaning that pensioners who have even a small additional income will face an income tax bill.

The tax-free personal allowance has been £12,570 since 2021 and will be frozen at that level until at least 2031. The full new state pension is £12,547 this year and will rise next April.

Burnham: We can't ignore North Sea oil

Andy Burnham has left the door open for future North Sea drilling as he confirmed that he told President Trump "we can't ignore" the resources there.

The two leaders held a phone call on Burnham's first day in office, during which the US president said the new prime minister told him he would "open up North Sea oil".

Burnham was asked during a visit to Barrow-in-Furness yesterday whether Trump was correct. "I indicated ... that I would take a pragmatic approach when it comes to the North Sea, and that is my intention," he said. "There is a resource there. When people are struggling, we can't ignore that."

Labour's 2024 manifesto said the party would not issue new North Sea licences, but Burnham appeared to leave the door open to a change.

Miatta Fahnbulleh, who succeeded Ed Miliband as energy secretary, said the manifesto was clear that there was scope to exploit existing licences and that oil and gas were "part of the mix".

Petrol prices heading for war record

Herbie Russell

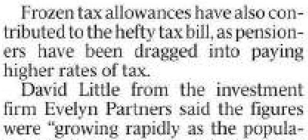
The price of petrol at the pump may rise today to its highest since the start of US-Iran war, analysts have said.

Forecourts were selling petrol at 159.55p per litre yesterday and prices are expected to pass 160p if escalation in the Gulf region persists. The United States launched new strikes against Iran on Wednesday evening after Tehran targeted ships in the Strait of Hormuz and US bases in Jordan.

Simon Williams, head of policy at the RAC, said: "The outlook for fuel prices is pretty grim. It looks highly likely that a litre of petrol will surpass 160p on average ... a new record since the United States-Iran conflict began. Diesel will reach 180p very soon and will continue to rise towards 185p."

James Hitchman, the operations director at PetrolPrices, said yesterday that 159.9p per litre was the most common petrol price on forecourts and that the mean average was lower, at 157.1p.

Fuel prices (p/litre)



Source: GOVUK, RAC

"Many retailers appear reluctant to move above the psychologically important 160p-per-litre threshold," he said. "Much of the recent rise in wholesale unleaded costs has already been reflected at the pumps, but retail margins remain slightly below their six-month average." If diesel rises to 185p per litre, it will still fall short of the peak of 192p in April, according to RAC figures. The peak price for petrol during the Iran war was 159.53p per litre, on May 28.

It costs £87.75 to fill up a 55-litre family car with petrol and £98.07 for the diesel equivalent, the RAC said. If petrol reaches 160p per litre, filling up will cost £88. If diesel rises to 180p per litre, it will cost £99.

Crude oil, which dictates the price of petrol and diesel, was trading at above $90 per barrel yesterday, a $3 increase from Wednesday and about $19 above its price a year earlier.

Williams said: "What's needed is a sustained drop in the oil price over several weeks and, unless that happens, elevated prices at the pump look like they're here to stay."

ZOE NORFOLK FOR THE TIMES

Emily Maton and the other members of the Lionesses A team, one of whom will have to drop out under the rules for Division 1 of the Four Nations Chess League

Man up to join top set, officials tell chess queens

An all-female team have been informed they must bring in a male player to meet rules, writes **Seren Hughes**

Since she was nine, Emily Maton has played the long game. She prefers to grind a chess match out over six hours to slowly "break down" her opponents, a method that has won her many accolades in the sport.

However, it is not only the strategy of the game she had to use to reach the top. On more than one occasion she witnessed a male player "smash all the pieces of the board and talk about how they can't believe they lost to a girl", Maton, 18, from St Albans, told The Times. "It would be me and my one friend and then a room of 50-year-old men," she added.

Faced with this overwhelming adversity, she joined an all-female chess team who, in May this year, became the first to reach the top tier of British chess: Division 1 of the Four Nations Chess League (4NCL), a prestigious national team event.

The team are delighted by their success in a male-dominated sport which, many women argue, creates an inhospitable environment for them.

Despite their achievements, the Lionesses A team — which includes eight players between the ages of 11 and 19 — has hit a big snag: they have been told they must bring in a male player to comply with league rules. This is something Maton and the team are steadfastly against, as it would "undermine the community" they have built.

In the league, eight players from each team play matches and the team with the most wins take the title. The rules say that each team in Division 1 have at least one male and one female player. Ironically, the rule was created to boost female participation. It has stood since the league's inception in 1994, and 4NCL has refused to change it. It is the only league in the UK to require mixed teams.

The Lionesses A Team is part of She Plays to Win, a non-profit created by Lorin D'Costa in 2020 to help change the gender imbalance in chess by encouraging more young girls to try the sport. It has helped 1,800 players so far.

Maton, who will compete at the U20 European championships next week, has played chess competitively since she was nine but recalls "always feeling hugely outnumbered" by men at tournaments. "I basically stopped attending my school chess club in secondary school just because you felt so isolated and out of place," she said.

As her team moved up the divisions at 4NCL, Maton, who is studying philosophy, politics and economics at the University of Oxford, said people had told them that "we don't deserve to be there, that we don't belong, we're going to struggle".

She added: "You see so many girls quit at around 13 years old just because they're sick of having people constantly doubting them."

She Plays to Win has countered that by creating a "strong community" of women and girls that hosts weekly dinners.

Maton said: "We're playing because we want this team to succeed and we really care about the others on the team. Before the matches we'll help each other. We'll share resources, we'll discuss tactics.

"When I was playing for other teams in the past, it would just be me and these men that I could just not relate to. And quite often it felt like you were only on the team so that they could fill the diversity quota.

"So this team, it's been an amazing step away from that, to be part of a team because of your own achievements. We're still outnumbered, but we're definitely seeing some progress, especially at the lower levels.

"It is a huge achievement for us to get promoted to that top level and prove them wrong that an all-female team can do it."

To achieve that and then to be told, "actually, you can't just be a female team anymore" undermined the "team dynamic and this community" she said.

Maton said that discussions about changing the rule had been happening for a while but that, now her team had been promoted, 4NCL had "become a bit more irate". The league begins again in October, and the team hope they can get the rule changed before then; otherwise, one of their players will have to be replaced by a male.

Mike Truran, finance director for 4NCL, said all the team captains from the 2025-26 season had been surveyed about whether the rule should be changed and there had been "no significant appetite", but that 4NCL remained "open to changing the rule should captains' opinions change".

He added: "There is no evidence that the rule as it stands discourages female participation in chess. Indeed, we believe that by requiring all teams in the top division to have at least one female player we actively encourage female participation in chess. We try to avoid positive discrimination/affirmative action if we can." A team with seven female players and one male player won the top division in 2010-11.

D'Costa said: "Not enough girls are playing chess at a young age, and this matters because chess teaches unique strategic skills for life.

"Learning these skills can help more girls go on to thrive in the type of strategic roles that end up defining the world of tomorrow — roles that for too long have been dominated by men."

BBC pulls game that called Guy Fawkes an 'astonishing activist'

Amelia Stout

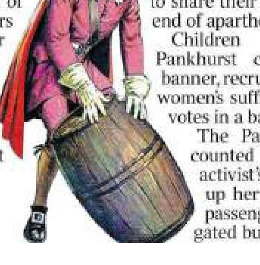
The BBC has been forced to pull a children's educational game that placed Guy Fawkes alongside Nelson Mandela, Rosa Parks and Emmeline Pankhurst as "astonishing activists".

The online resource invited primary school children to learn about people who "fought racism, campaigned for women's rights...and changed the world for ever" — including the Gunpowder Plot conspirator who tried to blow up parliament and kill the King.

Entitled *Back in Time With . . . Astonishing Activists*, the BBC Bitesize game invited children to take on the role of Fawkes during the attempted regicide, helping him evade the royal guard in the basement of parliament and kill rats while imprisoned in the Tower of London.

Fawkes was discovered guarding barrels of gunpowder beneath the House of Lords on November 5, 1605. The conspirators planned to detonate the explosives during the opening of parliament, killing James I and potentially hundreds of courtiers and politicians. Angered by James's failure to ease the persecution of Catholics, they hoped the attack would trigger an uprising and lead to the installation of a sympathetic ruler. Fawkes was caught, tortured and executed, while his co-conspirators were hunted down and killed. Factual material alongside the game explained the relevance of Bonfire Night as a celebration of the plot's failure, and players were encouraged to build their own digital bonfires.

In the Mandela section, pupils helped the future South African president put up posters, watched the years pass during his imprisonment and chose members of a "truth and reconciliation commission" panel, set up to allow victims of human rights abuses to share their stories after the end of apartheid.



Guy Fawkes was included in the game alongside Nelson Mandela and Rosa Parks

Children playing as Pankhurst could create a banner, recruit supporters for women's suffrage and collect votes in a ballot box.

The Parks section recounted the civil rights activist's refusal to give up her seat to a white passenger on a segregated bus in Alabama in 1955, which prompted a boycott led by Martin Luther King. Players were invited to look for bus stops and help people to their de-segregated seats.

A similar BBC Bitesize game allows children to play as Neil Armstrong, the astronaut, Amelia Earhart, the pioneering aviator, and Ibn Battuta, the medieval Muslim traveller.

The BBC said: "We acknowledge this description was too nuanced for the intended age group and have taken the decision to remove the game. Bitesize contains thousands of educational resources that we regularly review to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate for the audience."

Tourists flee heathland blaze

Police evacuated a Suffolk holiday park and advised locals to clear the area, writes **Lara Wildenberg**

There are hundreds of species of birds in the thousands of acres of heath at RSPB Minsmere, but yesterday morning, according to one bird watcher, the dawn chorus was quiet.

The nature reserve is near the Suffolk woodland burning in a forest fire that started two days ago.

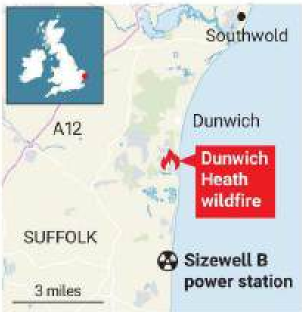
By yesterday evening the affected area had grown to 370 acres and a major incident had been declared in the county. The rest of the country is on high alert for blazes caused by record-breaking temperatures.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service was called to reports of a blaze at Dunwich Heath near Leiston shortly after 5.30pm on Wednesday. By yesterday evening there were 120 firefighters and a helicopter tackling the fire. They were expected to work throughout the night.

Sizewell B is three miles south of the fire, and a source familiar with operations said that there were "concerns" because of the ventilation and air-conditioning systems.

Freddie Gulliver, from the Suffolk joint emergency planning unit, said last night that Sizewell was "not a risk, not a concern at this current stage".

Holidaymakers staying in 200 caravans at Cliff House Holiday Park and in apartments at Coastguard Cottages and Mount Pleasant Farm were evacuated. Gulliver said that no properties had been destroyed and he had no knowledge of plans for other areas to be evacuated. The village of Dunwich was quiet as residents awaited instructions to evacuate or decided to leave.



One person said that the beach was the quietest it had been since Covid. Others worried about the fate of the flower festival due to be held at the weekend. The pub, The Ship Inn, was closed.

A police officer made rounds yesterday afternoon "strongly advising" people to leave, although not ordering an evacuation, and carrying out welfare checks on elderly residents.

A family of six from Norfolk were putting suitcases in their car, ending their holiday in Dunwich a day early.

Jo Arkle, 42, who works in renewable energy, said: "It's time to go. This is the second time we had to evacuate. We had to leave France before we came here. We thought we'd stick it out a little longer and see what happens."

The family were near Cotignac last week where wildfires have destroyed homes. "You could see it from the house and then all the alerts started going off on your phones," Arkle said. "The village next to us was leaving, almost identical [to now]. It was the night before we were meant to check out."

The family then came to Dunwich.

"It was a bit surreal yesterday because it was heaving on the beach, then we could hear sirens and see smoke and I said, 'It's a wildfire.' The kids said, 'No mum, don't be silly.'

"It's quite stressful, definitely. You realise quite quickly there's nothing you can do about it. The smoke was coming up right across here."

One of the teenagers, who did not give his name, said: "It's scary when you go to bed. You don't know if it's going to get worse overnight."

The family said the information in France had been much better, including alerts on their phones.

Arkle said: "There's no reception here, no wifi, so that's why we decided to go. Without power, how do we know [to evacuate] unless we [get a] knock on the door?"

A family from the Netherlands were due to stay at the Ship Inn but were relocated to the Westleton Crown. They came over by ferry from Rotterdam to Harwich and learnt of the fire at breakfast. Karina De Roos, 51, from the Utrecht area, said they had not expected wildfires in England.

She said: "My Dutch friends said, 'How can that be?'"

Her husband, Marnix, 54, said: "We thought we won't go to Spain or France, we better go here."

Karina said: "We thought it would be nice, not too hot. Now we're here, we're not sure where this is or what we can do here but at least they relocated us so we have a room."

One person who has lived in Dunwich of 17 years, who did not wish to be named, said that her daughter, who was staying with her, had packed her bags despite arriving that day. Her granddaughter, who is 12, had cried about the climate emergency.

Sally Taylor, 63, an artist from east London, runs a holiday let in Dunwich where she is considering moving with her husband. "Now we've got wildfires that could happen any time this year and probably now on, for ever," she said. "This is our business but we were planning to live here and it's very precious. It's really hot in London. We thought 'we can't cope with this' but we come here and it's surrounded by dry woods."

Their guest had cancelled but instead of staying in the cottage themselves, they were weighing up whether to stay with a friend due to the changing winds.

Evacuees took refuge in Westleton village hall, where a local chef cooked them breakfast and supermarkets donated supplies including 40 airbeds. A few were expected to stay in the hall overnight.

Jan Tucker, from West Sussex, was evacuated from the £300,000 holiday lodge she and her husband bought seven years ago. "We'd been waiting for it to happen because it's all so dry all around here since we first went there," she said.

Last night Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service said the situation seemed to be "stabilising". At 10pm it posted: "Although this remains a dynamic incident ... we believe we are in a better position than early this evening at 5pm."

The police strongly advised people to leave

SUFFOLK
FIRE A

A wildfire burns at Dunwich Heath, near the Sizewell B nuclear power station in Suffolk. Firefighters have been battling the

'Whiplash' conditions across Europe

Peter Chappell

Europe is ablaze after "whiplash" climate conditions have caused record-breaking wildfires across the continent.

More than 300,000 people have fled their homes in France and Spain, where firefighters are beginning to get the blazes under control. The extreme severity of wet-then-dry weather between winter and summer has been blamed for the intensity of the fires.

Winter rain caused more than average growth of trees and vegetation, before high temperatures dried them to a crisp. Then western Europe experienced its hottest June on record, bringing temperatures 3.06C higher than the 1990-2020 average.

In **Spain**, the country's largest ever wildfire has been burning in Sierra Oeste, west of Madrid. Responders say the fire has stopped growing and did not spread overnight on Wednesday. The authorities are also keeping an eye on a smaller fire near Valencia.

In **Portugal**, two outbreaks are being contained but are so hot that local firefighters are finding them impossible to extinguish. One fire chief said that the water his team were dropping from planes was evaporating before it reached the area.

The Bordeaux region of **France** has experienced the worst of the continent's fires, including an area four times the size of Paris that has burnt outside Bordeaux.

The Gironde and Landes have been ravaged, but the area has not increased overnight and yesterday's weather was expected to help.

Many residents in France and Spain are beginning to return home after firefighters made progress. The last remaining evacuation orders have been lifted for municipalities in the region of Madrid.

Three firefighters have died in **Greece** after trying to get fires under control in Crete and the Peloponnese region. In **North Macedonia**, more than 1,000 acres have been burnt near Prilep.

In **Bulgaria**, the emergency services extinguished 120 fires in 24 hours and two people were injured. In **Hungary**, the prime minister, Peter Magyar, has closed a nuclear power station for the first time in its history in response to low water levels in the Danube.

The Chiemgau Alps mountain range in **Germany** is on fire and 200 firefighters and emergency personnel are on the scene. In **Turkey**, firefighters battled wildfires on Wednesday near the southern tourist beaches and hundreds of people were evacuated.

In **Italy**, forested areas in the Apennines near L'Aquila are on fire, as is also the case in the regions of Calabria and the north coast of Sicily.

In nearby **Corsica**, firefighters are battling a blaze near the mountain town of Corte. The Restonica Valley, an area popular with hikers for its natural beauty, has been almost completely destroyed.

three miles from Sizewell B

JOE GIDDENS/PA; JOSHUA BRATT FOR THE TIMES; JACQUELINE LAWRIE/LNP

blaze which forced Dutch tourists Karina and Marnix De Roos and their daughter Valerie, left, to find an alternative hotel

Food shelves at risk from weather, warn supermarket bosses

Charlotte Bend

Wildfires and extreme weather pose a risk to the nation's food supplies, bosses of Britain's biggest supermarkets have warned in a letter to Andy Burnham.

The call to action to protect food security and reduce dependence on imports had more than 100 signatories, including the chief executives of Tesco, Waitrose, Sainsbury's, Aldi and the Co-op, making up over 60 per cent of the grocery market share.

The letter, which was drafted by the charity organisation The Food Foundation, urges the prime minister to back a legally binding framework that would improve national food and nutrition security.

The intervention comes amid growing concern about the effects of global warming on food production. The wildfires across Europe are part of increasingly extreme conditions facing farmers, with droughts, floods and heatwaves making harvests more vulnerable and disrupting international supply chains.

Rising temperatures and increasingly volatile weather are placing pressure on domestic agriculture while threatening many of the countries on which Britain relies for fruit and vegetables.

Signatories include food suppliers such as Danone and Greencore, the sandwich manufacturer, as well as charities including Barnardo's, Amnesty International UK and WWF-UK. Investment companies including Rathbones, farming organisations such as Soil Association and health organisations including the World Cancer Research Fund were also on the list.

Anna Taylor, executive director at The Food Foundation, described the food system as "dangerously exposed to shocks far beyond our borders" resulting in a need for a "long-term framework" to build resilience.

She added: "Over the last few years, we have seen this play out through rising food prices and increasing diet and health inequalities, with the price gap between healthy and less healthy food at the widest it's been for over a decade. At the same time farmers are struggling to make ends meet."

With international conflict pushing fertiliser costs up by more than 40 per cent since last year and UK food prices on track to be 50 per cent higher by November than at the start of the cost-of-living crisis, the letter sets out requirements for a Good Food Bill.

These include setting legally binding targets to reduce childhood obesity, reducing household food insecurity, requiring the government to publish a reference diet for all departments to work from so that policy across departments can work towards the same goals and to place a duty on ministers to consider food in decisions across health, education, farming, planning, environment and trade.

The letter also argues for five-year Good Food Action plans setting out how targets will be met, the empowerment of local leaders and the establishment of independent oversight to report annual progress publicly.

Ashwin Prasad, Tesco UK chief executive officer, said: "The Good Food Bill has the potential to provide the accountability and long-term commitment needed to drive meaningful change."

At a time when drought has been declared across half of England after record low rainfall and high temperatures, Simon Roberts, chief executive of Sainsbury's, noted how recent weeks had "shown just how much pressure our food system is under".

Roberts added: "We need a more resilient food system that attracts investment, backs British farmers and helps keep affordable, nutritious food on tables across the nation.

"Food and farming should be at the heart of government policy, helping to build a stronger and more resilient future. That's why I've signed the Good Food Bill."

Clooneys evacuate French estate

Joshua Thurston

Domaine du Canadel is in Brignoles, north of Toulon in southern France

George and Amal Clooney have evacuated their estate in southern France as wildfires continue to rage across Europe.

The couple's 18th-century home in the town of Brignoles, in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, is in one of the many areas threatened by wildfires spreading across France, Spain, Italy and Greece.

The couple announced their evacuation in a letter to Didier Brémond, the mayor of Brignoles.

"Dear Didier, at this point we have no idea whether our beautiful home makes it through this terrible moment," the letter read. "As we evacuate Brignoles we want to emphasise two things, first we hope you and the people of our city are safe, and second that Amal and I are committed to making sure that whatever happens to our village, we are part of this community and we'll be part of making it whole. We love Brignoles and our friends who live there."

The French authorities said yesterday that the fire in Brignoles, in the Var department, was contained and brought under control overnight. The blaze, which started on Wednesday, burnt 130 hectares and four firefighters were injured trying to contain it. "This morning, the work continues before the intense heat and the return of the south/southwest wind in the afternoon," Anne-Cécile Vialle, the sub-prefect of the area, told French television.

The authorities told 84,000 evacuees forced out by wildfires yesterday to return to their homes.

Clooney, 65, and his lawyer wife, 48, became French citizens last year, along with their nine-year-old twins, Alexander and Ella. Their estate, Domaine du Canadel, features 425 acres of land, a 25-acre vineyard, a 22-metre pool, an olive grove, lake and tennis courts.

A short drive from the estate is the winery owned by Brad Pitt, Château Miraval, which became the subject of a dispute after Angelina Jolie filed for divorce in 2016. It is also likely to be under threat from the fire.

Domaine du Canadel is one of several properties the Clooneys own across the world. Others include an estate in Italy's Lake Como region, bought in 2002, and a historic manor in Berkshire.

Call for tougher laws on barbecues and bonfires

Rhys Blakely Science Editor

Ministers must consider new laws and tougher penalties to stop people lighting bonfires or using disposable barbecues during droughts, a senior scientist said, as wildfires blazed across Britain.

Professor Nigel Arnell, of the University of Reading's department of meteorology, said the large fire at Dunwich Heath in Suffolk would once have been regarded as extraordinary.

However, as climate change brings hotter and drier summers, the country is likely to see similar scenes far more often, he said.

Arnell's research suggests that in the south and east of England, the average number of "very high" fire danger days each year could more than quadruple by 2080, increasing from about 20 days a year to more than 100 days. So-called "exceptional danger" days, which once occurred every 50 to 100 years, could happen almost every other year.

"Five years ago, fires like those we've seen in Suffolk would have been a surprise," he said. "They've become inevitable, in a sense, because conditions are getting worse."

More than 200 wildfires were recorded in England and Wales between July 16 and 28, according to the National Fire Chiefs Council.

Most are caused by people, through discarded cigarettes, barbecues, machinery, controlled burns that escape control, or deliberate acts.

At present there is no single UK law that automatically bans bonfires or disposable barbecues because a drought has been declared.

"There's also a case for more public education," Arnell added. "I've seen people lighting bonfires in the past few days ... they're not thinking properly."

JANE BARLOW/PA

Shape shift The "full buck" supermoon, named because male deer regrow their antlers in July, rises behind Emer Tumilty's Commonwealth Games artwork in Glasgow

Reoffending at record high as 70,000 inmates released early

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

The proportion of criminals who reoffend has hit a record high, according to data also showing that more than 70,000 prisoners have been freed under Labour's early release scheme.

Nearly 25,000 adult criminals have committed more than 127,000 new offences since July 2024, according to Ministry of Justice figures. This means that the reoffending rate for all adult criminals — including those not previously imprisoned — was 31.9 per cent, up from 29.2 per cent the previous year and the highest since the data started to be recorded, in 2013.

MoJ figures also showed that more people were recalled to prison than were released in the first three months of this year. A total of 12,977 prisoners were released from jail between January and March but 13,193 were recalled.

In the 12 months to March, 51,419 prisoners were put back behind bars after breaching their licences, an increase of 28 per cent from 40,259 in the previous 12 months and the highest number since 2015.

The MoJ admitted that the early release scheme was "likely" to have contributed to the rise in recalls. However, it also said that it was likely to have been influenced by changes under which most offenders are taken back into custody for 56 days, instead of being held until the end of their sentence. This was another measure designed to tackle overcrowding, although the most serious offenders are still subject to the standard recall.

Only 22 per cent of prison recalls involved a new charge. Most were prompted by breaches of licence conditions, such as failing to keep in touch with probation services.

Andy Keen-Downs, chief executive of the Prison Advice charity, which supports prisoners, said: "The prison population crisis will not be solved if as many people are being sent back to prison as are leaving it.

"Recall is an important tool for protecting the public, and where someone presents a genuine risk of harm there must always be a swift response. However, hundreds of people are recalled every month not because they have committed new offences but because they have fallen foul of licence conditions. This makes little sense at a time when the government is doing everything it can to reduce pressure on the prison system."

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the social justice charity Nacro, said: "Thousands of people are being sent back to custody each year for licence breaches rather than new crimes, with there being nearly 10,000 people in the last quarter alone.

"We know from our work with people in the criminal justice system that many of these recalls are linked to homelessness after leaving prison, addiction to drugs and alcohol and mental health issues."

A total of 70,066 prisoners have been freed early since September 2024, when Labour brought in emergency measures to tackle prison overcrowding. The proportion of sentences some prisoners must serve in England and Wales was reduced from 50 per cent to 40 per cent.

Nick Timothy, the shadow justice secretary, said Labour had "reached for the easiest tools possible".

The MoJ said that the government had taken "decisive action" to prevent the "total collapse of our prison system", adding: "Protecting the public will always be our top priority."

Parents sue school over 'inhumane' calming rooms

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

Ten parents are to sue a London school after CCTV images allegedly showed pupils with autism being mistreated in "inhumane" isolation rooms.

Lawyers said yesterday that they were planning to issue proceedings against the Flourish Learning Trust, which ran the Whitefield School in northeast London.

A leaked video emerged in 2024 that purported to show children being thrown to the floor or restrained by their necks while shut inside padded and windowless "calming rooms". Pupils were shown to be allegedly self-harming and sitting in their own vomit after being "shoved" into the rooms. The footage emerged in a three-year investigation by the BBC. The broadcaster said at the time that it had also found "evidence of mistreatment in seclusion rooms at other schools across the UK". One autistic child was alleged to have been "kept inside a cage".

Dame Rachel de Souza, the children's commissioner, said that the footage depicted "absolutely appalling experiences" as she called for formal review of previous practices at the academy.

Yesterday, lawyers at the firm Leigh Day said that the review, published by Waltham Forest Safeguarding Partners, had found that "children's dignity, safety and wellbeing were compromised and that the use of seclusion was not therapeutic or supportive, but punitive". They added that the parents had been justified in describing the practices as "inhumane".

Leaked CCTV footage showed a pupil being pushed into a "calming room"

Flourish Learning Trust said: "We recognise the seriousness of the events ... and our thoughts remain with the children and families affected. The trust no longer operates any schools, and none of the leadership are in post. Arrangements are in place to ensure oversight until the trust is ... closed."

Quintagram® No 2634

Solve all five **concise** clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Swine (3)

_ _ _

2 Set of actors in a production (4)

_ _ _ _

3 Verbose and aimless talk (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

4 Wrestling (9)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Classic music hall song (3,3,4)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	A	A	C	D	E	F
F	G	G	G	I	I	I	L
L	L	N	N	N	O	O	P
P	P	R	R	S	T	W	Y

Solutions see T2 MindGames p15
Cryptic clues T2 MindGames p14

Palestine Action appeal

Palestine Action can challenge the Home Office's decision to ban the group as a terrorist organisation on the ground that Yvette Cooper, who was home secretary at the time, incorrectly applied her policy. It cannot challenge on interference with freedom of speech or freedom of association. The Supreme Court will hear the case this year.

New cancer hope

Tracy Tomlinson, 58, from Greater Manchester, who has advanced ovarian cancer, has become the first person to receive a new therapy that uses immune cells from donors. ZI-MA4-1 harnesses natural killer cells, which destroy abnormal ones, and T-cell receptors on the cells are engineered to target tumours producing Mage-A4, a protein.

Abbott back in Labour

Diane Abbott says she has been readmitted to Labour. She was suspended in July last year after defending remarks for which she had apologised. The MP for Hackney North & Stoke Newington served an initial suspension in 2023 after suggesting that Jewish, Irish and Traveller people experienced prejudice but not racism.

£10,000 for WWI medals

The medals of Brigadier General William Scott-Moncrieff, who was killed leading a charge at Gallipoli, have been sold for £10,000. Moncrieff came out of retirement at the age of 56 to serve in the First World War and was commanding officer of 156th (Scottish Rifles) Brigade at the Battle of Gully Ravine. His medals included the 1914-15 Star.

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Chef rebukes parents after bad eggs ruin chicken coop

Herbie Russell

A Michelin-starred chef has criticised the parents of "selfish little brats" who broke into a chicken coop at one of his pubs and smashed fertilised eggs.

Adam Handling, a former *MasterChef* finalist, attacked "evil" guests who let their children run riot while other diners let their dog savage chickens at his Tartan Fox pub near Newquay, Cornwall.

The chef, 37, now plans to install extra CCTV and motion sensors to "idiot-proof" the three-acre establishment.

Handling said that diners had become "frivolous" when it came to child discipline in restaurants, noting that children were often allowed to use their phones at the table.

He described how one set of guests ignored signs asking them to keep dogs on leads, allowing their pet to attack the chickens. Although Handling said in the video that "a few" of the chickens had died as a result, the restaurant said that one bird died and three were injured.

That day, while diners were enjoying Sunday lunches priced at £49 for three courses, Handling said children crawled through the coop's entrance.

Staff later found the debris, including eggshells and the yolks of between 30 and 40 eggs left stuck to a tree half an acre from the dining area.

In a video posted to Instagram, Handling said: "I have no idea what goes through kids' heads when they're doing it, but you know the thing? I don't understand the parents who allow their children to act that way in public places.

"There were about 30 or 40 fertilised eggs that were completely smashed because of these selfish little brats. It's totally unacceptable. It says more about the parents than the child."

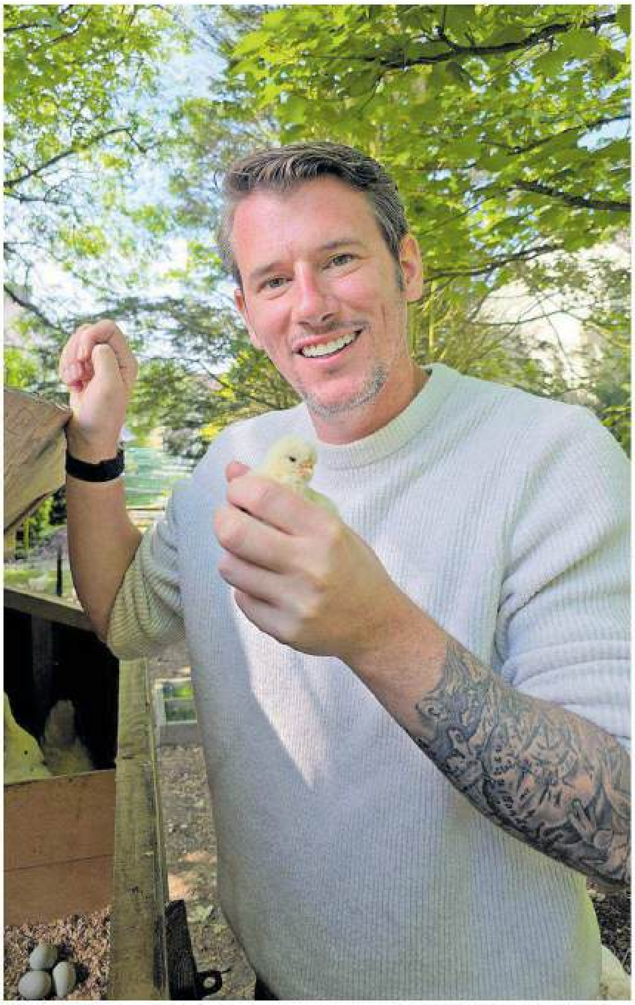
Although nobody witnessed the incident, the chef said only a child or an "extremely small adult" could have got inside the coop. He added: "We're installing motion detector cameras all around the chicken area so people can watch the chicken cams on our website, but also for us to see when anything goes wrong.

Handling explained that the pub's 48 chickens were housed in a coop protected by two layers of fencing, but were allowed to roam freely around the grounds whenever possible.

He said: "They are pretty much completely hand-reared. So when they see humans, these wonderful little things come running at you, they'll peck your shoes." He described the birds as "my babies".

The chef, who was a finalist on *MasterChef: The Professionals* in 2013, said: "What I do feel is, when it comes to the younger generations, people are a little bit more frivolous with discipline."

He added: "Kids are on their phones; they do their own thing. It's not like when we were children.



Adam Handling, a Michelin-starred chef, accused diners of letting their dog savage his chickens. Left, hens at his Tartan Fox pub near Newquay, Cornwall

"For me, it's lack of education and lack of parenting. The kids would have had to have been away from the table for some time. It's unusual for parents not to keep an eye out for where their kids are, quite frankly."

The Tartan Fox is one of six venues run by Handling, including the Michelin-starred Frog restaurant in central London. He said one "bad apple" did not mean all guests were incapable of good manners. However, he is not the first person to complain of a decline in decorum. In 2022 the restaurateur Keith McNally banned James Corden from his restaurant, Balthazar, after accusing the actor and comedian of "obnoxious behaviour". Tom Kerridge previously told the *Red Talks* podcast that he received more complaints from guests when there had been heavy drinking. He said he tended to ignore TripAdvisor reviewers, explaining: "You do get the odd thoughtless person who complains. We had someone complain that the lamb tasted too lamby."

This year a mother whose child "spoilt" a former BBC newsreader's lunch at a country hotel insisted that her children were well behaved, and labelled the comments "unfair and frankly offensive". Alex Edwards, 35, said her family had been unfairly targeted by Jan Leeming, who complained online about how a meal at a country hotel was ruined by a screaming child.

Monkeys show there's no mate like a primate

Rhys Blakely Science Editor

The natural world is supposed to be a cruel and unforgiving place, red in tooth and claw.

Yet researchers at the University of Oxford have found hundreds of examples of animals of different species that might normally ignore, avoid or eat each other behaving in a friendly way.

Among the more striking cases were stump-tailed macaques grooming domestic dogs in Thailand, tufted grey langurs stroking giant squirrels in Sri Lanka and young snub-nosed monkeys playing with farmyard pigs in China.

In Brazil, a troop of capuchin monkeys adopted an infant marmoset and cared for it for ten months. In the jungles of Madagascar, lemurs groomed other lemur species as if they were kin.

The study, published in the journal Primates, is described as the first comprehensive review of friendly social behaviour between non-human primates and other species. Often it seemed as if they were being nice with no obvious reward.

Researchers compiled 427 cases involving 88 primate species and 127 "partner species". The most common types of behaviour were play and grooming, though holding, carrying, huddling with and sharing food were also recorded.

Young primates were especially likely to play, with some seen riding deer, while adult females were the most enthusiastic groomers.

Dr Cyril Grueter, who led the study, said: "Humans have long been considered unique in forming close social relationships with other species. Our study shows that many primates also display remarkable curiosity, tolerance and even caregiving towards animals that are not their own species."

He added: "These behaviours don't amount to pet-keeping as we know it, but they may represent some of the evolutionary building blocks from which human-animal companionship eventually emerged."

Not all encounters were affectionate. A male baboon in Saudi Arabia appeared to have kidnapped a domestic puppy. Researchers recorded 13 instances in which the partner animal died.

Grueter said the findings could help improve the management of mixed-species groups in zoos and sanctuaries.

Wasps stung by weather extremes

Rhys Blakely

If beer gardens have seemed more comfortable recently and picnics rather less fraught, scientists may have an answer: Britain appears to be suffering from a national shortage of wasps.

Professor Seirian Sumner, a behavioural ecologist at University College London, believes several indicators are pointing in the same direction.

The first is the pest-control industry. Its workers are called when nests appear in attics, sheds and gardens. "They say it's a very, very quiet year," Sumner said.

Another is the media. When wasps become numerous, newspapers tend to write about it. Last year Sumner, who is also the author of the popular science book *Endless Forms: Why We Should Love Wasps*, gave dozens of interviews to reporters as complaints about the insects multiplied. This year she has not been bothered by the media.

She suspects that a "triple whammy" of difficult weather could explain the wasp shortfall. The spring's promising start was interrupted by sudden cold and wet weather, including almost frosty nights in May. That may have killed queens or destroyed young nests.

Then came repeated heatwaves. Parched ground, dying flowers and depleted nectar supplies left adult wasps with less food, while also reducing the range and nutritional quality of the insects they catch for their larvae. The wasps that have appeared have often seemed unusually small.

For picnickers, fewer wasps may sound like cause for celebration. But Sumner suspects unwanted consequences. "My kitchen is full of flies," she said. "And one reason might be because there are no top predators around."

Wasps are pest controllers. Remove them and populations of flies, crop-eating bugs and other unwanted insects may rise, potentially encouraging greater use of chemical pesticides.

Sumner is asking the public to help record the wasp population through a project known as the Ham or Jam survey. Anyone visited by a wasp while eating outside is asked to look at whether the wasp chooses protein or sugar. A wasp going for a ham or chicken sandwich is gathering protein for its larvae. One seeking jam is feeding itself.

After you see a hungry wasp you can report what food it was seeking using a simple online questionnaire.

Sumner recommends that picnickers then cut off a small morsel and leave it at the edge of the plate for the wasp. "Make a wasp offering," she said. "It could potentially help the wasps, and it definitely helps the scientists."

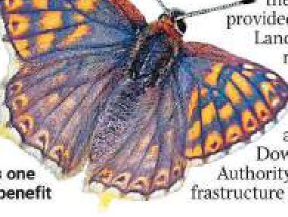
Chalk grassland scheme to help threatened butterflies

An area of "precious" chalk grassland the size of nearly 70 football pitches is to be restored as part of a £160,000 project to provide new habitat for the threatened Duke of Burgundy butterfly.

The scheme, led by Hampshire county council and the South Downs National Park, will also help orchids, cowslip, harebell and the chalk hill blue butterfly at Butser Hill National Nature Reserve near Petersfield.

The council said the works would "help reinstate the chalk landscape and reintroduce a natural water supply ... to enable areas to be grazed by animals — a more natural, less intensive approach to managing this fragile habitat".

The Duke of Burgundy butterfly is categorised as vulnerable on the GB red list and has threatened status in Europe. Funding for the project has been provided by National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative, the Big Chalk Partnership's Nature Recovery Fund and the South Downs National Park Authority's community infrastructure levy.



The Duke of Burgundy is one species at risk that will benefit

PM accused of dodging defence spending problems

Larisa Brown Defence Editor

Andy Burnham has been accused by one of the authors of the strategic defence review of using a submarine announcement as a "smokescreen" for "dodging" defence spending problems.

General Sir Richard Barrons, a former head of joint forces command and co-author of the review of Britain's armed forces, warned that for the UK to "credibly deter" Russia by 2030 it needed more money faster than currently planned.

He questioned whether hitting the Nato target of spending 3.5 per cent of GDP on defence by 2035 would be feasible if steps were not taken now to dramatically increase defence spending and said Burnham needed to "seriously brush up" on national security.

Barrons told The Times: "Talking about current, funded nuclear programmes cannot be a smokescreen for dodging the issue of the defence spending needed in time for the UK, in Nato, to credibly deter Russia by 2030 not 2035. This is a problem that will not go away just by ignoring it and the clock is ticking ever louder."

A senior military source added: "It is really important for the morale of service personnel that we as a country are seen to be making the investments that will make us credible in military alliances."

On a visit to Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, yesterday, Wes Streeting, the defence secretary, said he was "not ruling out" committing to 3 per cent spending by the next parliament, but that it was a question for future budgets and spending reviews.

He told Times Radio: "When we make spending commitments, it's really important we set out how they will be paid for. We've seen in the past, I'm afraid, under our Conservative predecessors, the heavy price Britain pays when you look like you're playing fast and loose with the public finances and setting out reckless spending without saying how it would be funded or setting out reckless tax cuts without saying how they would be funded.

"So that commitment to fiscal discipline is important, because if you don't do that, you end up paying a far heavier price for losing that credibility and we will not make those mistakes."

John Healey, who resigned as defence secretary under Sir Keir Starmer's leadership and is now chancellor, said upon his resignation that he was "certain" Britain should reach 3 per cent by 2030. Healey later told the BBC that the next spending review should set a "necessary target date" for 3 per cent on a "convincing, credible path to meeting that 3.5 per cent target that we have signed up to as a nation".

He said "Britain can't lead if we are lagging behind" and by 2030 more than half the Nato nations will have reached or exceeded 3 per cent. The funding currently available for the defence investment plan will mean the UK spending 2.68 per cent by 2030.

Healey warned there could be an attack by Russia on Nato as soon as that date and "European security is at stake".

Burnham faced questions about the 3 per cent by 2030 on Wednesday and gave his strongest indication yet that he would not increase the defence budget to meet the figure in the next four years. He said that defence commitments related to the next parliament — a reference to the 3.5 per cent Nato target only.

No 10 announced £8.4 billion would be invested in the next stage of the project to build four new nuclear-armed Dreadnought submarines that will eventually replace the ageing Vanguard fleet that makes up Britain's continuous at-sea Trident deterrent.

Barrons pointed out the funding for the submarines was "not new money", although Burnham's emphasis on using Britain's defence programmes to reindustrialise parts of the country was.

He said: "The project was approved years ago and the recent defence investment plan under Starmer outlined £63.6 billion to fund it. This £8.4 billion figure is within that envelope and just signifies the latest contracts for the project. Instead of making this about the security of the nation as a first-order talking point, Burnham has pivoted to a domestic focus."

He said the prime minister had made a "clever link that fits well into his priority of fixing regional inequality" but that Burnham will "need to seriously brush up on national security and defence to confront the very real threats Britain faces in the 2020s".

Military officers in the Ministry of Defence welcomed the appointment of Healey to the Treasury, believing it signalled a dramatic increase for defence before the next election. However, Barrons said "this now looks in doubt".

John Foreman, a former defence attaché to Moscow and Kyiv, said the existing defence programme was "overheated and unfunded".

He said: "What they need is to set out a path to 3.5 per cent. And they won't do that until after the next general election. If then. Burnham won't get reelected by spending more on defence."

Reaching 3 per cent by the next parliament would cost the UK an additional £17.3 billion in 2029-30, according to the Office for Budget Responsibility.

General Sir Richard Barrons is a former head of joint forces command

French police 'inconsistent' on boats

Continued from page 1

some situations but not others. "The gendarmes are very cautious. Last year, when they slashed the boats, it led to quite a difficult situation," they said. "Land-based officers can't go into the water because they will be criminally responsible if someone dies ... but they will go in and do it depending on the right circumstances. It's quite frustrating because it's not consistent."

The French government agreed in April to dedicate a total of 125 officers from two specialist units to patrol the beaches. The Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité (CRS) is providing 50 officers trained in the use of riot and crowd-control tactics and the Compagnie de Marche is a new unit dedicated to combating small boat crossings.

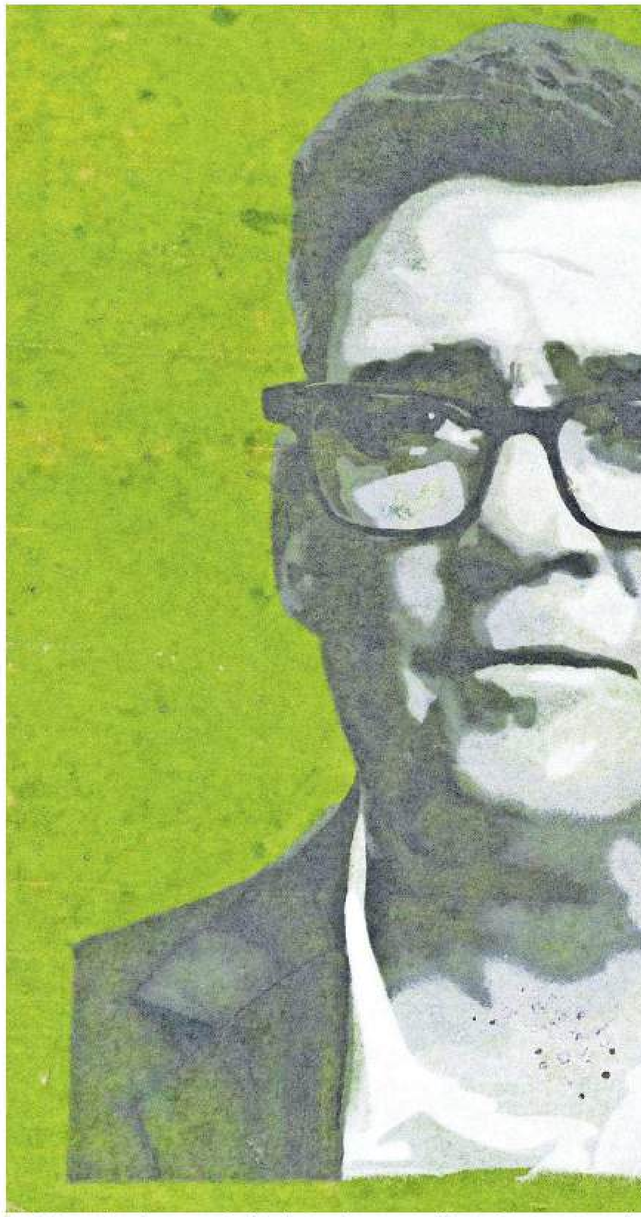
However, there were no officers from either unit on the beach on Wednesday. A Home Office source said the lack of officers on such a busy day of crossings was "frustrating" and "far from ideal".

Wednesday's crossings took the total number of migrants to have reached the UK in small boats this year to 14,128, which is down 44 per cent compared with this time last year.

Three women were found unconscious by a French rescue vessel that responded to an emergency call from a so-called "taxi boat" at 6.30am yesterday. It had travelled from elsewhere on the French coast to pick up more migrants from the beach at Dunkirk. Late on Wednesday a man in his thirties died after a dinghy capsized when migrants attempted to board a boat on Hardelot beach, 30 miles south of Calais.

The Home Office said it was "a stark reminder of the dangers posed by criminal gangs exploiting vulnerable people for profit", adding: "We will continue working relentlessly with the French and our partners overseas to prevent these perilous journeys."

A rescue yesterday after a failed attempt to cross the Channel from a beach near Dunkirk



A 4,000 sq m land art portrait of Andy Burnham created by Sand In Your Eye and

Poor Andy, held back all the way to No 10

Tom Peck
Political Sketch

It's been a busy start for Britain's brand new prime minister but not so busy that he didn't have time for the now-obligatory long-form chat, which is not to be confused with an actual interview, with a podcaster. For Andy Burnham, it was *Jimmy's Jobs of the Future*, hosted by a faintly familiar young man called Jimmy McLoughlin, whose faint familiarity we shall return to in due course.

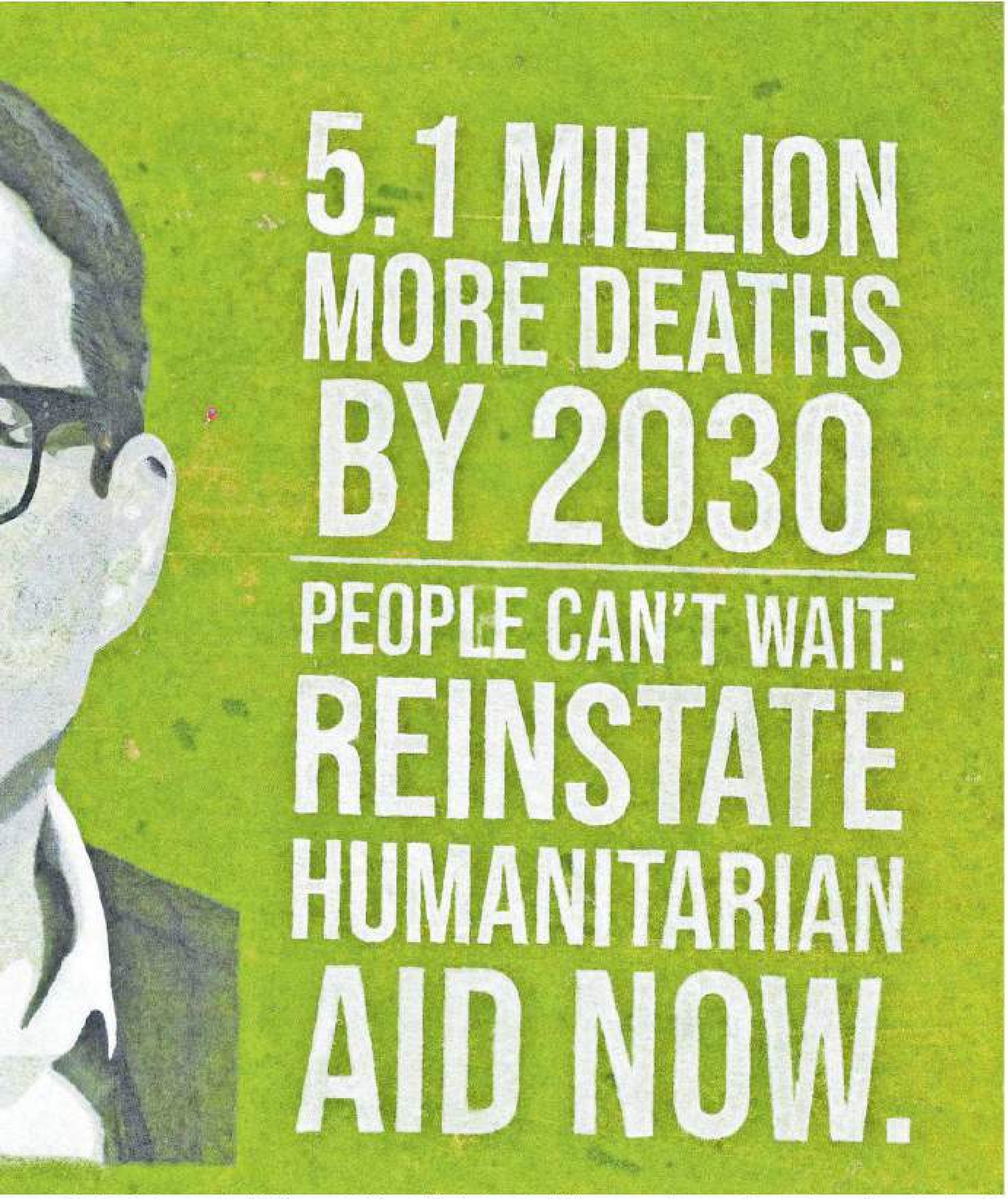
The pair sat in one of Downing Street's many anterooms. Traditionally, at this point, the little-old-me podcaster likes to gaze in wonderment at the walls around them and become theatrically overwhelmed by the grandeur of it all. On this occasion, we were spared that well-worn vignette, mainly because McLoughlin used to work there, as a special adviser to Theresa May and Boris Johnson.

In this particular episode, McLoughlin seemed to want to talk more about the past than the future, specifically Burnham's past, and how it had led him here, to the highest, most exalted job of the present. How had a humble, working-class lad from Manchester somehow made it all the way to No 10, with only his clear-eyed ambition and his degree from Cambridge to guide him?

Burnham likes to pretend to be as shocked as anyone by his success. He reminisced, not for the first time, about his Cambridge years, and struggles with "impostor syndrome"; a common affliction these days, used to pathologise anyone who may get nervous on their first day in a new job, especially if they have the outrageous misfortune to have not been born posh.

Life after Cambridge had been a struggle for Burnham. "The people I'd been at university with, who had very connected parents, were just walking straight into internships at The Times, placements at the BBC, into Goldman Sachs and all sorts of things," he explained. Young Andy returned to Manchester after

TEMILADE ADELAJA/REUTERS



the charity Concern Worldwide near Hebden Bridge in West Yorkshire as part of a campaign to reinstate humanitarian aid

graduation for no more than an unpaid job at the Middleton Guardian. Was it his lack of connected parents that did it? Who knows, but I was at Cambridge not that long after Burnham, and in my observation, it wasn't the well-connected ones who went on work placements in glamorous locations.

It was the well-organised ones, the odd ones, the ones with clear goals from age 18. Which is not the down-to-earth, charming, likeable ones, like Burnham, possibly wasting their days leafing through Penguin classics in the English faculty.

For most of the interview, McLoughlin nodded along in agreement, but on the subject of connected parents his head went still. Perhaps he was checking his notes. Or maybe it was a tricky sentiment to agree with when your time as a special adviser to the prime minister happened to coincide with the period in which your dad, Sir Patrick McLoughlin MP, was chairman of the Conservative Party.

"I went back to Manchester with the full intention of living and working in Manchester," said Burnham, while McLoughlin nodded along. What he intended to do in Manchester he didn't make clear, but given that almost everyone who knew him at Cambridge has said, several times, he would talk regularly about his burning desire to be an MP, it must have been a shock to pull into Manchester Piccadilly station after three long years away and then discover that the House of Commons wasn't there. "It stuck with me, all my life, that to get on in life I had to leave where I grew up, and the injustice of that ... rankled."

This was such a startling thing to say that I had to rewind it several times. Isn't upping sticks in search of new opportunities the defining characteristic of the human condition? Isn't our country's entire modern national story defined by, to take one example, the immigrants who had the courage to get on a boat or a plane and build a better life for themselves? Isn't that what humanity, at its most base level, is all about?

But Burnham held firm. He seems to believe that going to Cambridge has done him no favours because he was too working class. "My dad said, oh Cambridge University — it was him who had to persuade me to go — it will throw doors open for you," he said. "But it's not, it's connected parents, and I as a politician have fought to change that."

It's a remarkable thing to say. To deny that doors have been thrown open for you, a week after the most famous door in the world was literally thrown open for him. He's also wrong. It would be damaging to his brand to admit it but the second you walk into Oxbridge you're part of the establishment, like it or not.

For the little it's worth, my parents were state school teachers. But I got my first job in journalism because someone I knew from the student newspaper gave me some freelance shifts on the diary pages at The Independent. Neither in that story has a private education or a connected parent. The connections get made when you're there, without you noticing. One day you look and your pals are ambassadors or partners at enormous banks, or, if you were at Fitzwilliam in the late Eighties, the prime minister.

Is that nepotism? Probably, but it's got nothing to do with connected parents, it's connected ambition. And if Burnham believes that none of that applies to him, that he's never benefited from any of it, he's living in his own world of make-believe.

Andy Burnham told Jimmy's Jobs of the Future about "impostor syndrome"

Thousands of young carers locked out of work and education

Ben Clatworthy Whitehall Editor

The number of young adult carers has surged by 100,000 in the past decade and an "alarming" proportion have ended up out of work or education.

At least 300,000 people aged 16 to 24 are classed as informal carers, although experts said the true figure was significantly higher given the high level of under-reporting.

Statistics show that 23.1 per cent of young carers are classed as being not in education, employment or training (Neets), compared with 5.3 per cent of those who have no additional responsibility.

Experts said carers were the forgotten cohort in discussions about the youth unemployment crisis. More than a million young people are now classed as Neets in the UK.

Alan Milburn, who is leading a government review of the Neets crisis, said: "A cohort the size of a mid-sized city has emerged in six years, largely invisible to the institutions that should be supporting it."

Fifty-one per cent did not achieve five or more GCSEs at grade 9-4 (A* to C), compared with 36 per cent of non-carers.

Professor Saul Becker, the founding director of the Institute for Children's Futures at Manchester Metropolitan University, said that many young adult carers got "stuck in a vicious cycle that's alarming", leaving them sidelined.

He said: "If we want to break that vicious cycle, where a large proportion of young people who have a caring role become Neet, we need to intervene earlier in these children's lives, to reduce their care-giving role, so that they can get a good grade at school, can go on to college, university or to develop technical skills."

Becker added that the "true challenge" for reforms to social care was to create an "interrelated system" that joined up adult social care, children's social care, healthcare, education and youth services.

On Wednesday Andy Burnham vowed to put social care reform at the top of his agenda as prime minister. He plans to launch a National Care Service. Baroness Casey of Blackstock, who is leading a review of the sector, will report back next year. The prime minister also said he was "on a mission" to halt the rise in the number of Neets. At present, one in eight young people aged 16 to 24 are classed as Neets, and the figure is predicted to reach one in six by 2031.

Dominic King-Carter, the director of policy and public affairs at the Carers Trust, a charity, said: "Young carers have long been the overlooked casualties in the Neet conversation with many locked out of education and employment opportunities through no fault of their own. If the government is serious about ensuring every young person is earning or learning, it must prioritise comprehensive support ... better identification in schools and colleges, and a dedicated 'young carer lead' in every education setting to help them navigate their responsibilities."

It is estimated that there are a million young carers aged 17 or under, equivalent to three people in every class of 30.

As a cohort, their persistent absence rate from school is 35 per cent, about double the national average.

Sir Ed Davey, the leader of the Liberal Democrats, said: "Brave young people are sacrificing their education, careers and futures to look after the people they love. They step up where the social care system falls short, and yet are left to pay the price."

He said ministers "must recognise the role they play and support them far better", adding: "This support should include a 'young carers pupil premium', to fund extra tuition for missed classes, and a dedicated young carers lead in every school."

The government said: "We are determined to ensure every young person has the chance to earn or learn, including young carers who face particular challenges. Our £2.5 billion youth employment support package will support half a million young people ... into jobs, training or work experience in the coming years.

"In schools and colleges, where we are accelerating our rollout of mental health support teams, investing in attendance mentors and rolling out free breakfast clubs to help pupils attend regularly, we've already seen the biggest year-on-year improvement in attendance in a decade."

Mayor tax powers will fuel resentment, ministers told

Constance Kampfner, Ben Clatworthy

Areas without mayors will be "locked out" of fiscal devolution powers, which will "increase resentment" towards Whitehall, ministers have been told.

Andy Burnham is to announce what has been billed as "the biggest transfer of power from Westminster in a generation", giving regional mayors a share of the income tax and business rates revenues raised in their communities.

The policy is intended to act as an incentive towards growth by weaning areas off Whitehall grants and towards a funding model that encourages them to increase the number of local businesses and taxpayers.

Burnham, who will visit Yorkshire today to announce the policy, said: "More of the taxes raised in a community will stay in that community."

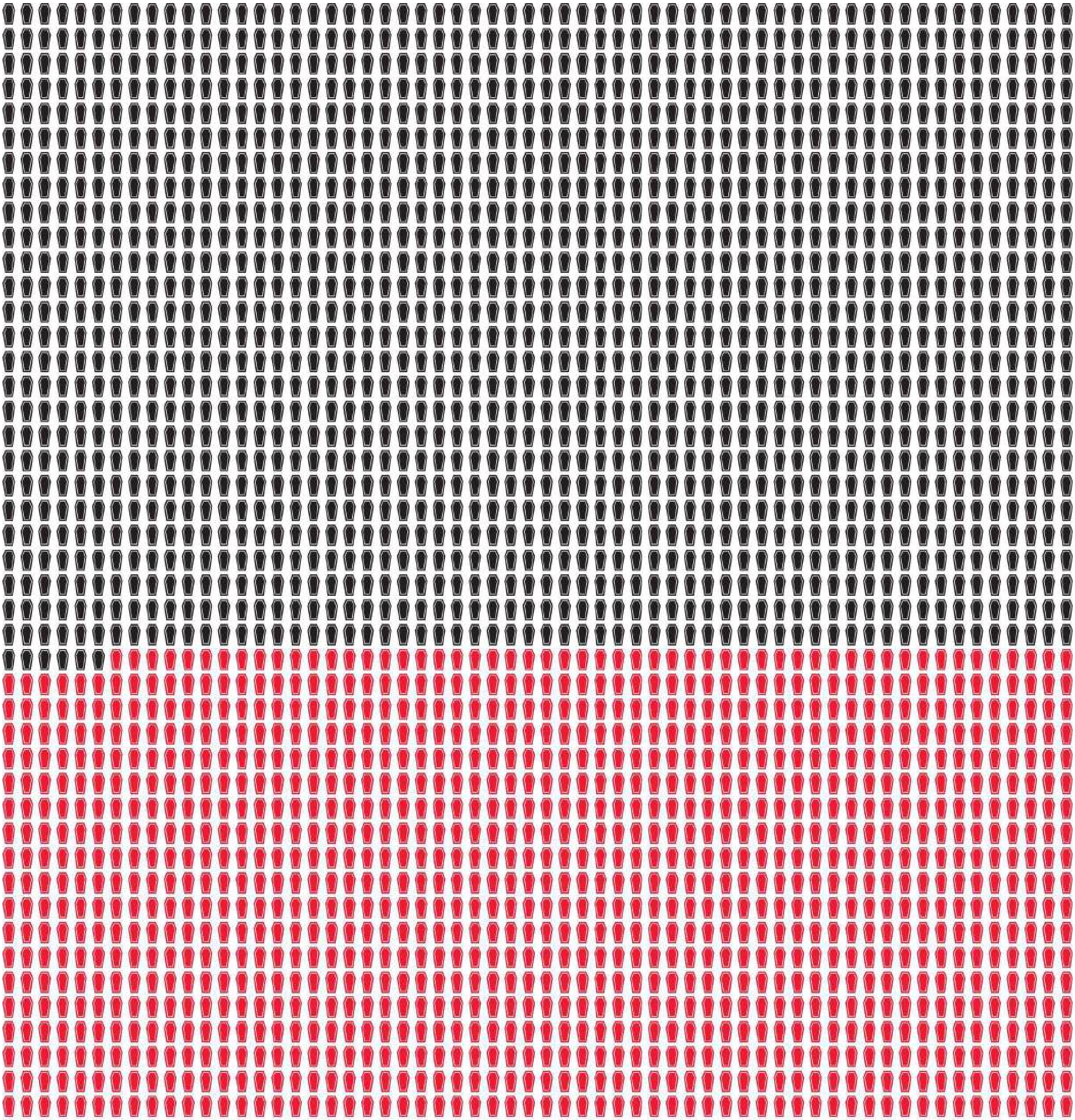
However, half the people in England live in areas without regional mayors. Perran Moon, the Labour MP for Camborne & Redruth, said Cornwall would be "locked out" of the scheme. He said: "It's discriminatory and it will increase resentment towards Westminster."

Cornwall is one of five areas that already benefit from business rates devolution, to be expanded to all 14 mayoral regions from next spring, but will not benefit from income tax devolution, which is to come into force in 2028.

Some mayors have said they intend to use their new fiscal powers to offer tax rebates to voters.

Ministers will also announce extra powers for non-mayoral strategic authorities to improve public transport, build homes and create jobs.

Pat McFadden, the work and pensions secretary, said the shake-up would hand power to leaders "who know their communities inside out".



BURNHAM: MORE OIL & GAS = MORE DEATHS

Heatwaves killed around **2,700 people** in England and Wales this May and June.
Over 40% of these were avoidable deaths attributable to global heating.

Keep your word on climate and say **NO** to Jackdaw and Rosebank.

Source: Imperial College London, 'UK climate heat health risks May and June 2026' (13 July 2026)

Friends of the Earth Scotland

Friends of the Earth

UPLIFT

GREENPEACE

Kate the fairest of them all in fashion stakes

Hannah Dodd is on Tatler's list with the Princess of Wales and Valentina Pinault, whose mother is Salma Hayek. Edward Bluemel, right, and Gjin Lipa, top left, also made the list

The Princess of Wales has been named one of Britain's best-dressed people by Tatler magazine after returning to public life having undergone cancer treatment (Peter Chappell writes).

Kate was praised for her outfits on visits to Italy, at Royal Ascot and during the Three Peaks Challenge last month.

Her vibrant canary-yellow Roksanda "Brigitte" dress at Ascot won her the top spot on the annual list. She paired it with a yellow hat by Jane Taylor and two pieces of jewellery that had belonged to the late Queen and Diana, Princess of Wales.

Also praised were her modern ecru pleated skirt and linen striped blazer on her tour to Italy, as well as her Roland Mouret dress at Peter Phillips and Harriet Sperling's wedding.

Others who made the top-ten list include Raj Arora, a doctor and influencer; Gjin Lipa, the brother of the singer Dua Lipa; Jemima Khan, a socialite who is the former wife of Imran Khan, the cricketer and ex-prime minister of Pakistan; and Sir Tristram Hunt, the V&A director and former Labour politician.

Arora, who came second, was praised for making "even medical scrubs look chic", and for her navy ensemble and Chanel handbag as she watched Trooping the Colour.

In third place was the British athlete Temi Ojora, who Tatler said "applies a champion's mindset to her wardrobe".

Khan, whom the magazine called the "original aristo It girl", was described as the "epitome of eternal glamour".

Top-ten style icons

Princess of Wales
Dr Raj Arora, influencer
Temi Ojora, athlete
Edward Bluemel, actor
Gjin Lipa, influencer
Batia Ofer, art collector
Jemima Khan, socialite
Valentina Pinault, aspiring film-maker
Sir Tristram Hunt, historian
Hannah Dodd, actress

Batia Ofer, the Royal Academy Trust chair, was also recognised. Ofer "makes philanthropy feel as bling as the cash she brings to the institution. Naturally, she's a client of Chanel, favouring high jewellery and gowns you could hang in the Louvre," Tatler said.

Edward Bluemel, the youngest actor to play Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot, was the highest man on the list, in fourth place: "There's no mystery to [his] get-up: 1990s tank tops and acid-wash straight-leg jeans ... sharp Dior on the social scene. That London cool-boy look? He-dunnit."

Hunt, a former shadow education minister, was as "dapper as his museum halls", Tatler said, praising his Schiaparelli dove brooch, a homage to a V&A exhibition.

Hannah Dodd, who plays Francesca Stirling in *Bridgerton*, was named for her Chanel tailoring and love of Giambattista Valli.

McCartney up for Mercury prize at 84 (while Sir Mick misses out)

Peter Chappell

In rock's oldest rivalry, a Beatle has secured bragging rights over the Rolling Stones — again.

Sir Paul McCartney's latest album, *The Boys of Dungeon Lane*, has been shortlisted for the Mercury prize, the first time he has been nominated for the coveted music award since it was launched in 1992.

He is joined on the list by popular and critically acclaimed artists including Florence + the Machine, Raye, Olivia Dean and Suede.

There is no room, however, for the Stones' latest album, *Foreign Tongues*, which despite critical praise and chart success did not win favour with judges who have never shortlisted Sir Mick Jagger's band for the award.

The snub is just the lasted instalment in the long relationship between McCartney and the Stones, whom he once dubbed a "blues cover band".

McCartney first met the Stones when the Beatles were persuaded by a music promoter to hear them play at a pub in Richmond in 1963. They then went to an apartment building in Chelsea to a party until 4am. George Harrison recommended them to Decca records, and they were quickly signed. Jagger and Keith Richards had their first hit when the Beatles lent them one of their tunes, *I Wanna Be Your Man*, and the two bands soon became seen as rivals for pop fan's attention.

McCartney told an interviewer in 2020 that the Beatles were always looking over their shoulder at the grammar school boys from Dartford.

"We started to notice that whatever we did, the Stones sort of did it shortly thereafter. We went to America and we had huge success. Then the Stones went to America. We did *Sgt Pepper*; the Stones did a psychedelic album. There's a lot of that," he said.

"We were great friends, still are kind of. We admire each other," he said.

At 84, McCartney ties with Martin Carthy as the oldest artist to be nominated for the Mercury prize. The winner will be announced on October 22 at a ceremony in Newcastle. As its title suggests, McCartney's latest recording looks back to teenage crushes in the cold Mersey mornings and hitchhiking out of Liverpool with George Harrison with dreams of glory.

Elsewhere on the list, two relative unknowns have been credited by the judges. Dove Ellis is a Galway singer-songwriter and Knats are a jazz quintet led by two childhood friends.

I can't begin to predict who will win this year, Will Hodgkinson, Times2

VICTOR BLACKMAN/GETTY IMAGES

Paul McCartney and Mick Jagger have pursued a friendly rivalry since the 1960s

The shortlist

The Boy Who Played the Harp Dave
Blizzard Dove Ellis
Everybody Scream Florence + the Machine
That's Showbiz Baby! Jade
A Great Day in Newcastle Knats
Don't Look Down Kojey Radical
Emotional Junglist Nia Archives
The Art of Loving Olivia Dean
The Boys of Dungeon Lane Paul McCartney
This Music May Contain Hope Raye
Antidepressants Suede
Help(2) War Child

Ex-minister 'not part of campaign'

David Brown Chief News Correspondent

A former justice minister who joined Prince Harry and Sir Elton John in a failed privacy case has distanced himself from their anti-press campaign.

Sir Simon Hughes asked for the High Court to be told that he was not part of a plot to target Associated Newspapers, the publisher of the Daily Mail.

The celebrities face a demand from the publisher to pay its £34.4 million legal costs after losing their case that they were victims of unlawful information gathering including hacking, bugging and blagging. Their insurance covers up to £16.2 million.

Mr Justice Nicklin, the trial judge, said that it was clear that campaigners behind the celebrities' claims had attempted to use the case to demand stricter controls on the press.

Antony White KC, representing the publisher, furiously dismissed Hughes's claim, telling the court: "He accused Associated Newspapers of widespread criminality of the most heinous forms and has not withdrawn any of those allegations, not one."

Nicklin will announce next month how the court will calculate the amount the celebrities must pay towards the publisher's legal bills.

Thousands die waiting for help with care funds

Eleanor Hayward Health Editor

More than 30,000 people died last year while waiting for a social care package to be arranged by their local council, data has revealed.

Local authorities are having to ration support for patients, many of whom have dementia, and the proportion of frail and elderly adults in England getting help has halved in the last 20 years.

Campaigners say this means many spend their final weeks and months struggling with daily tasks including dressing, washing and eating, worsening their condition and their distress.

Analysis of NHS data by the Liberal Democrats shows that, since 2020, some 167,900 people have died waiting for their local council to arrange a social care package such as a care home place, which can take months. More than half of requests for help are rejected.

There were 30,845 deaths among people waiting for care in 2024-25, including 9,000 people who had been in NHS hospitals. Some 3,080 working-age disabled adults also died last year waiting for care packages.

Baroness Casey of Blackstock, who is leading a review into social care, said the system was "gatekeeping people away from receiving care" so many get "no help at all until they hit crisis point".

Her review found that the number of older people receiving long-term public support halved in the last 20 years, which she said was "not because there are fewer older people, it is because older people are getting less help".

In total, 55 per cent of requests for care have been denied since 2020, relating to more than five million people. Of these, 2.6 million were given "information" and told to contact GP, charity and community NHS services.

On Wednesday Andy Burnham promised to create a national care service. Sir Ed Davey, leader of the Liberal Democrats, has pledged to work with him on reform. Alison Bennett, the party spokesperson for care and carers, said: "It is an absolute tragedy that hundreds of thousands of people, including 17,000 disabled adults, have died waiting for support that never arrives. This is a national emergency and we cannot afford any more delay."

People only qualify for council-funded social care if they have less than £23,250 in assets. Local authorities spend about 80 per cent of their day-to-day funds on social care, but have been unable to keep up with demand, leading to stricter criteria for qualification.

Jane and Geoff Atkinson of Swanage, Dorset, used up his £400,000 life savings as his Alzheimer's worsened. They now get help with his care home fees, right

Michelle Dyson, chief executive of the Alzheimer's Society, said: "These shocking figures make crystal clear just how urgently we need to improve the care and support available to people living with conditions like dementia."

When Jane Atkinson's husband Geoff was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2018 it marked the beginning of a bureaucratic and financial nightmare which has compounded the heartbreak of his illness. They did not qualify for state-funded support even as Geoff became incontinent, suffered falls and started escaping from their home in Swanage, Dorset.

In 2023, Atkinson, 74, was advised that her husband, 75, should move into a care home, costing £2,000 a week. She has used up Geoff's life savings of £400,000 to pay. Last year their money ran out. Atkinson was initially denied local council funding and was also rejected for an NHS care package.

"Geoff was bedbound, incontinent, couldn't move, couldn't walk, couldn't communicate. But because his illness was dementia, and in his brain, he didn't qualify for support as it was not deemed a physical illness," said Atkinson.

Applying for local authority funding for social care was "a fog of forms and spreadsheets", and this year she went through it again. This time the council agreed to help with Geoff's care home fees, but she still has to contribute £600 a week. "I'm not sure how I'm going to pay that over the next few months."

They have been able to keep their family home because she lives in it.

On Burnham's commitment to social care, she said: "I'm hopeful that there will be some kind of system in place, not for me but for other generations."

Why fixing social care is everything to PM, Patrick Maguire, page 23

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iPhone 17 Pro 256GB	36m	£30	£31	£1,116.12	£1,146.12	0%	0%	£1,146.12	Unlimited Ultimate	£32.99	£35.49	£37.99	£63.99	£66.49	£68.99

£514 saving consists of £46.20 discount applied to Device Plan (total cost of device was £1192.32 now £1146.12) and further £468 saving achieved by £13 per month discount on the Unlimited Ultimate Airtime Plan for 36 months. £30 upfront. Airtime discount applies until you change tariff, leave or upgrade. Subject to availability. Premium delivery available between £5.99 and £9.99. 14-day cooling off and other cancellation rights apply. Ends 5 August 2026. Direct purchases only. Pay the cash price for your device or spread the cost over 3 to 36 months (excludes dongles). Certain device costs available to be spread over 3 to 48 months. The device cost will be the same whatever you choose. There may be an upfront cost. You can pay off your Device Plan at any time and choose to keep your Airtime Plan, upgrade it, or leave. If you are in the first 24 months of your Device Plan and you cancel your Airtime Plan you will have to pay the remainder of your Device Plan in full. After 24 months you can keep your Airtime Plan, upgrade it, or end it without affecting your Device Plan. UK calls/texts to standard UK landlines and mobiles and when roaming in our Europe Zone. Europe Zone data only. Fair usage policy applies. Special and out of bundle numbers chargeable. Fair usage applies. Use tariff allowances when roaming in our Europe Zone. O2 Travel Inclusive includes unlimited minutes and texts and data roaming (with capped data speeds of 2 Mbps) in our Inclusive Zone. Non-commercial use only. Traffic management steps will apply. Terms apply, see o2.co.uk/terms Devices subject to availability. 0% APR. Finance subject to status and credit checks. 18+. Direct Debit. Credit provided by Telefónica UK Ltd, RG2 6UU. Telefónica UK is authorised and regulated by the FCA for consumer credit and insurance. See o2.co.uk/terms

British surfer presumed dead after search called off in Portugal

Amelia Stout

One of Britain's top-ranked surfers is believed to have died off the coast of Portugal after he got into difficulty while stand-up paddleboarding on Monday morning.

Tributes have been paid to Arran Strong, who disappeared about a mile offshore from Arrifana, a fishing village in the Algarve.

Strong, 28, had been accompanied by his friend and coach, José Maria Pyrrait, who said he had turned round to see Strong's board floating 100m behind and was unable to find him despite diving repeatedly. Pyrrait was later rescued by a fishing vessel.

The Portuguese national maritime authority confirmed that its searches had been suspended "without the victim being located".

GB Surfing said that it was "deeply saddened by the tragic passing of Arran Strong", who was the highest-placed British male surfer at the 2024 and 2025 ISA World Surf Games.

The maritime authority said that Strong had run into difficulties while trying to cross from Monte Clerigo Beach to the village of Carrapateira.

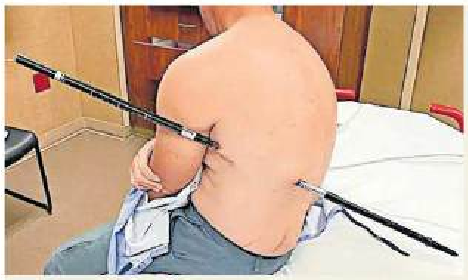
Pyrrait said they had stopped to drink water and take photographs before setting off again, Strong initially leading before Pyrrait overtook him.

"When I stopped to wait, I saw your board drifting about 100m away," he wrote on Instagram. "I paddled as fast as I could to get there, diving repeatedly looking for you, but we were in a deep area and visibility was very short."

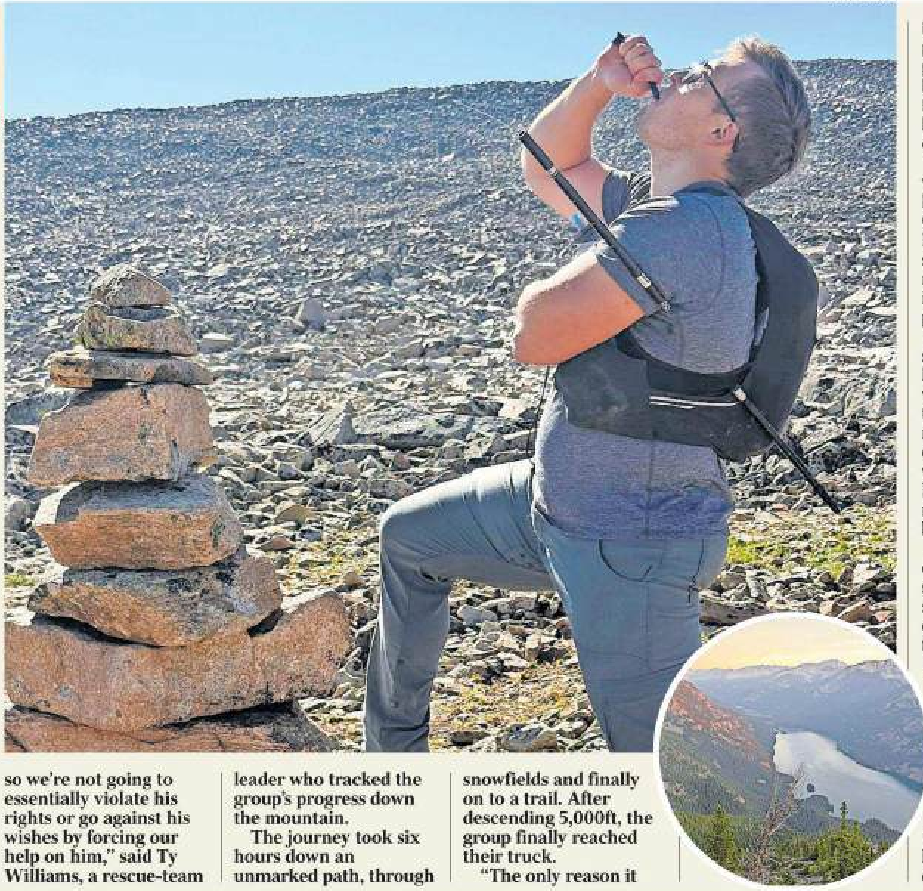
He added: "Arran was like a son to me. From the age of ten, he trained with me and spent weekends and holidays with me."

Surfing England said: "Arran brought warmth and positivity to everyone he met and his loss will be felt deeply across the surfing community. A serious talent from an early age, Arran and his mum would travel from the Canary Islands to compete in the UK, and he went on to represent Team England and Great Britain on the world stage.

"Beyond his achievements in the water, Arran will be remembered for his kindness, generosity and the positivity he brought to those around him. He was respected and admired throughout the surfing community."



JESSE ROSS/AP



David Cifaldi, his torso pierced with a walking pole, takes a break during his trek to safety in the Beartooth Mountains, below. Far left: his injuries on arrival at hospital

Hiker impaled by pole treks 10 miles

A nurse conducted his own ten-mile rescue after being pierced through the torso by his trekking pole while hiking in Montana's Beartooth Mountains (Kelly Rissman writes).

David Cifaldi, 32, and his two friends were crossing the Froze-to-Death Plateau, a notoriously icy stretch on the way to Granite Peak, when the 44in pole punctured him under his left arm through his back.

One would expect that such an injury would require medical rescue. Cifaldi, however, decided he could get back down the mountain without the need for an expensive helicopter flight with a search and rescue team.

"I was like, 'We've got to get off this mountain.' And they're both like, 'I don't know about that,'" Cifaldi recalled of his friends' reaction. "I'm pretty confident this is outside my chest wall. 'Tis but a flesh wound."

Cifaldi, from Billings, told the Associated Press that he did not experience much pain or blood, so the group ultimately decided to brave the trek down the mountain unassisted.

"There was no danger to anybody else. He didn't want our help and so we're not going to essentially violate his rights or go against his wishes by forcing our help on him," said Ty Williams, a rescue-team leader who tracked the group's progress down the mountain.

The journey took six hours down an unmarked path, through snowfields and finally on to a trail. After descending 5,000ft, the group finally reached their truck.

"The only reason it was possible at all was his confidence," said Cifaldi's friend Jesse Ross. "Who are we to say anything? He's the medical person. Our job is just to support at that point."

Their first post-hike stop was the nearest hospital, where Cifaldi was told he needed treatment at a larger medical centre. He ended up at the hospital where he works in Billings, where doctors removed the pole and bandaged his wounds.

"I think 99 times out of 100 I would make the same decision," Cifaldi said. "Search and rescue coming to help you is free. The flight's not. That was a factor in me deciding to self-rescue. But the fact that I had two experienced, great friends with me and we had the ability to contact search and rescue if something went wrong made that a lot more of an easy decision."

Suspect used suitcase woman's phone

Anthee Carassava, George Odling

The suspected killer of a Scottish women who stuffed her body into a suitcase is thought to have used her mobile phone to send text messages for several days afterwards to give the impression she was still alive.

The Greek authorities formally identified the victim yesterday as Elisabeth-Jane Ross, 38, from Edinburgh.

Her remains were discovered inside a derelict building in the Kypseli district of central Athens on July 18. A local man told the authorities he had been trying to locate the source of a foul smell when he found the suitcase with a human limb protruding from it.

Forensic experts estimated that Ross had been dead for at least three days.

According to local media, texts sent from Ross's phone to her family on July 15, the last day she was seen alive, said that she "needed some time to herself" and that she "wanted to be alone for a while". The phone remains missing but was said to have been active in the Athens area until this week, when the discovery of the body was made public.

Investigators suspected that the victim was not Greek because she was wearing shorts bearing the name of a French university. Police turned to Interpol for help. Her identity was confirmed on Monday evening and she was named by the Greek media on Wednesday.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office said: "Our thoughts are with Elisabeth's family during this difficult time. We are providing consular support and are in contact with the local authorities."

Ross arrived in Greece from Edinburgh on June 26. A senior police investigator confirmed to The Times that she flew direct from Scotland to Athens, correcting previous reports that she had travelled from the United States via Cyprus.

She was last seen alive by two friends — a couple — she had been staying with in Athens on July 15. Police said that the couple had been ruled out as suspects after "extensive questioning." A police source added: "We have interviewed her Greek friends and there is nothing to incriminate them. In fact, they have provided very important information." Ross told the couple she was going to stay with American friends in Kypseli but police would not say if they had been able to trace them.

Police remove the body of Elisabeth-Jane Ross, which was found in a derelict building

The abandoned house where the body was found had been used by the homeless as a shelter. Detectives cordoned off the property and were scouring security camera videos, hotel bookings and flight logs to trace Ross's final movements and try to find the individual who used her phone. A police source said officers were "sweeping the area, questioning many people, largely homeless and drug users".

He added that suspicion was focusing on "fringe elements" because of where the body was found.

"This isn't just any building," he said. "It is used by homeless and drug users."

Preliminary examinations on Ross's body showed no visible wounds or signs of a struggle and the authorities were awaiting toxicology and post-mortem examination results. The source said the results, expected within days, could show whether Ross died of a drug overdose. They added that investigators were examining her network of contacts on social media and whether she had travelled to Greece to meet someone.

Mourners placed a bouquet of flowers, a candle and a photo of Ross with the message "an angel was here" by the graffiti-sprayed iron wall next to where her body was discovered. A member of staff at the Panellinios sports hall opposite the derelict site said police came to take CCTV video of the scene. "We weren't even allowed to see the footage, but hopefully it captured whoever it was who dumped the body in there," they said. "The place always has drug users and homeless people in there as it's just a shell of a few buildings.

"The homeless man who discovered the body lives nearby. He has lived on the streets for a while and is well known around here but even he was shaken by what he saw."

The head of Greece's forensics bureau said that "special investigators were examining evidence in hope of finding DNA traces of the murderer".

Because the victim was found with no identification, Greek police were forced to circulate her DNA and fingerprints through Interpol. The American authorities ultimately provided the matching records.

John Swinney, the first minister, said Ross's family would be supported by the Scottish government and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

"This is an absolutely appalling case that has been reported overnight," he said. "Obviously I'm deeply concerned that such a tragedy has taken place."

Net zero blamed for high airport drop-off fees

Laurence Sleator
Transport Correspondent

The government's net-zero targets are causing the continued rises in airport drop-off and pick-up fees as authorities attempt to discourage passengers travelling by car, campaigners have warned.

Britain, a world leader in airport drop-off fees, charged drivers up to £1 a minute to leave passengers close to the terminal. All big airports in the UK charge drivers at least £5 to stop at the terminal doors for a so-called "kiss and fly" drop-off, and campaigners have now claimed the policy — which raises £300 million a year for airports — is exacerbated at some airports by the government's transport and environmental policies.

Under "surface access strategies", airports set targets of how many of its passengers must arrive at the terminal by public transport.

The government's permission for Gatwick Airport to build a second runway was conditional on at least 54 per cent of passengers getting to and from the airport by public transport.

Luton Airport, which is hoping to almost double its capacity to 32 million passengers per year, was told in the development consent order for their application that the number of passengers arriving by car must be "no higher" than 45 per cent.

Both airports recently increased their fees substantially. Gatwick's fee rose by £3, taking the total fee to £10 for ten minutes, while Luton increased its fee by £2 to £7 for ten minutes. Heathrow charges passengers £7 for ten minutes, up £1 from 2025.

Keir Mather, the aviation minister, has encouraged all airports to "use their surface access strategies to set clear targets for sustainable travel" to deliver a "green, more sustainable future". Opposition parties said the government targets and rhetoric were forcing airports into continually raising charges as they try to meet their targets.

Research from the RAC found that 16 of the UK's 20 busiest airports have increased the charges drivers face. Prices have risen by an average of £1.70 to £7, compared with this time last year.

London Gatwick and London Stansted charge the highest fees (£10 for 10 minutes and 15 minutes respectively), followed by Edinburgh and Bristol (£8.50 for 10 minutes), and Leeds, London City and Bournemouth (each £8 for 10, five and 30 minutes respectively). Last week, the House of Lords voted for a review of the "out of control" drop-off fees but the amendment was not binding allowing the government to block it.

AirportsUK said the fees were "part of the airport business model and help support the provision of the widest variety of flights from the airport".

The Department for Transport said: "We understand the importance of keeping travel accessible for holidaymakers, which is why the government expects car parking at UK airports to be managed appropriately, and consumers treated fairly."

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ANDREW MATTHEWS/PA

Grand entrance A racegoer arrives in her finest on Ladies' Day at the Goodwood Festival near Chichester, Sussex, a highlight of the sporting and social calendar

Inquiry after BA jet stalls on approach to Heathrow

Laurence Sleator

Air accident investigators are examining a serious incident involving a British Airways passenger jet as it was flying over London.

Flight BA919 from Dusseldorf, Germany, reportedly stalled in the air near Canary Wharf on its approach to Heathrow on July 6.

Data from the flight showed the Airbus A320-232, which can accommodate up to 186 passengers, dropped from 6,000ft (1,800m) to just under 4,000ft (1,200m) in four minutes.

Its groundspeed fell to 148 knots, or 170mph, only a little faster than a plane travels as it comes into land on the runway.

The Sun reported that one of the aircraft's air data systems had failed, the jet stalled and the captain stepped in to override the first officer's initial input to remedy the problem. After the intervention, the plane recovered to 8,000ft (2,440m) altitude and a speed of about 250 knots, equivalent to about 287mph.

"To recover from this position is difficult, especially so low to the ground," a source told The Sun. "It is unheard of for a captain to physically intervene in the cockpit."

The incident has been reported as "loss of control in-flight" and described as "pilot induced".

An aircraft stalls because of a rapid decrease in lift caused by the separation of airflow from the wing's surface. It will normally cause the plane to descend rapidly, and to recover, a pilot must immediately reduce the angle of the nose and add full power to increase airspeed.

Senior figures told the newspaper that there was almost a "hull loss" — a term used in aviation to describe the status of an aircraft which has been destroyed or has been determined to be damaged beyond repair.

The Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB) said: "The AAIB is investigating an incident involving a British Airways aircraft on 6th July and will update in due course"

British Airways said: "We're assisting the AAIB with its investigation and are legally unable to comment further at this stage."

Isabelle Welsh had 21 broken bones and was sexually abused before suffering a fatal head injury in September last year. Left: flowers outside the home in Teesside

Mother and her boyfriend jailed for killing infant

EVENING GAZETTE

Jessica Sharkey Crime Correspondent

A mother and her partner have been jailed for life for the "sadistic" murder of her two-year-old daughter, who was sexually abused before suffering a catastrophic head injury.

Isabelle Welsh had injuries including 21 broken bones and 89 bruises in the weeks before she suffered a fatal injury at her home in Thornaby, Teesside, in September last year.

Alexandra Walker, 26, and Harrison Simpson, 22, were convicted of murder and child cruelty this week after a trial at Teesside crown court. Simpson was also convicted of sexually assaulting Isabelle. Walker was cleared of that charge.

Ms Justice Norton sentenced Simpson and Walker to life with minimum terms of 28 years and six months and 22 years respectively.

She said that both had been "jointly responsible" for Isabelle's death, adding: "It is difficult to characterise the course of conduct towards Isabelle as anything other than sadistic."

The court was told that Isabelle had been fatally injured on the morning of September 13, suffering a fractured skull and an "unsurvivable" brain injury caused by being hit against a hard surface. It could not be said who had inflicted the fatal injury, but Walker said she had been sleeping in after staying up late drinking and smoking cannabis.

The judge said Simpson never gave any account for what happened and that Walker was a "fantasist and attention-seeker" who had told "lies from start to finish", including pretending she had breast cancer and telling people she did not take drugs when in fact she sold them.

Walker waited at least an hour before calling for help after googling "why would my toddler be bleeding?". In that time, she smoked two cigarettes and cleared away evidence of cannabis use.

Alexandra Walker and Harrison Simpson were convicted of murder

When paramedics arrived, within a minute, Isabelle was at the foot of the stairs and was not breathing. They found bruises all over her body, blood in her nappy and vomit on her face, the court was told. She died the next day in hospital.

A post-mortem examination showed that her skull was fractured, her brain was damaged and that she had been sexually assaulted.

Addressing Walker, Norton said: "I have no doubt whatsoever that your lack of urgency or concern for your child was because you wrongly believed that Isabelle was already dead and you were working out what to do to save your own skin."

The couple had met on Facebook Dating during the summer and Simpson often visited Walker's house. The trial was told that Walker had voiced concerns that Simpson might be a paedophile and thought it was "weird" that he preferred to see her and Isabelle at the same time, rather than to be alone with Walker.

Walker, who had been domestically abused in past relationships, did not break up with Simpson despite being suspicious enough to check whether he was on the sex offenders' register.

Cameras in Walker's home showed that she frequently drank and Simpson was a habitual cannabis smoker.

Eleven days before her death, Isabelle was taken to her GP and then to the University Hospital of North Tees with a broken leg. Walker had waited two weeks to seek medical help as Isabelle struggled to walk, and said she had hurt her leg when it was caught in her cot.

The judge said concern among medical staff that might have saved Isabelle's life had been overruled when other doctors accepted Walker's false account. The staff followed a child protection policy but "differences of opinion" between the paediatric and orthopaedic teams meant that the toddler was discharged back to her mother.

Walker had acted aggressively towards nurses and later looked up how to win compensation from the NHS.

Sentencing Simpson, Norton said that Isabelle had been a "happy, healthy and thriving child" before he came into her life and that "within a matter of weeks" she was being physically and sexually abused.

Videos from June last year, before the couple met, showed Isabelle playing. She was happy, healthy and smiling.

Richard Wright KC, for the prosecution, told the trial the fatal injury had been "simply the end point in that campaign of violence to which she had been subjected". In his closing speech, he said: "The thing that changed, that set in train this calamitous decline from a happy, healthy child to sexual abuse, gross and repetitive violence and murder was the introduction by Alexandra Walker into her life, and that of her child, of Harrison Simpson."

He told the jury that the relationship had "created the conditions in which that little girl could be abused so terribly" and, in a "final cruel and savage attack", be murdered.

Outside court after the conviction, Isabelle's father, Josh Welsh said: "My little girl ... my whole life has been shattered, my whole family. My sisters and brothers have lost their niece. It means the world to me that we have justice for Isabelle."

Detective Chief Inspector Steve Chatterton of Cleveland police said the case had been "one of the worst" his team had dealt with.

He said that Isabelle had been a "defenceless child whose life was cruelly taken from her", adding: "She deserved a future filled with love, safety and happiness, she was denied that opportunity and she must never be forgotten."

Police chief guilty of gross misconduct

David Woode Crime Editor

The former chief constable of Staffordshire has been found guilty of gross misconduct two days after he quit his role.

Chris Noble, who had led the force since 2021, was suspended in August last year after "serious concerns" were raised about his behaviour. He was served with a gross misconduct notice and faced a disciplinary hearing.

He resigned from his £181,000-a-year post on Tuesday, less than 24 hours before the panel met to consider the allegations. Noble, 52, did not attend the two-day hearing at Yarnfield Park training and conference centre in Staffordshire.

Kathryn Stone, the chair of the three-person panel, said yesterday that the allegations against Noble had been proved. Stone told reporters: "Mr Noble breached the standards of professional behaviour to the level of gross misconduct. He would have been dismissed had he not resigned."

Reporting restrictions prevent the media from revealing the panel's findings and what Noble did. The outcome of the hearing will be shared with the College of Policing, which sets the standards for law enforcement. Noble will be placed on the barred list, which will prevent him from working in policing and other law enforcement roles.

Chris Noble resigned from his £181,000-a-year post this week

Ben Adams, Staffordshire's police and crime commissioner, said: "Public confidence in policing is vital, so all allegations of misconduct must be fully and independently investigated. That process must apply to everyone, regardless of rank or status."

Becky Riggs will remain as acting chief constable.

Noble's career began in 1996 when he joined the Royal Ulster Constabulary, which became the Police Service of Northern Ireland, where he spent 21 years. Between 2017 and 2021 he served as the assistant chief constable of Humberside. He was also the national lead for policing protests and co-ordinated local law enforcement responses to the Israel-Gaza conflict.

Noble graduated from Queen's University Belfast with a law degree and earned a master's degree in criminology and executive police leadership from Cambridge University.

Criminals make as much from fraud as drug trade

Jack Simpson Money Reporter

Payment fraud has become as lucrative as the global drugs trade, a leading security think tank has suggested.

Last year more than £329 billion was lost globally to authorised payment fraud — when a criminal tricks you into sending money — with profits "rivalling the illicit drugs trade", according to the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). The think tank said the UK was being targeted by overseas scammers, with an estimated two thirds of payment fraud originating overseas.

Authorised payment fraud can vary from impersonation scams — when, for example, criminals pretend to be your bank — to romance scams, where they start a fake relationship online.

The report said half the world's population was targeted by scammers each week. Fraud-related notices issued by Interpol had increased 54 per cent between 2024 and 2025. It said that financial scams were now an important income source for "polycriminal" organised crime networks, which also engage in corruption and even terrorism.

RUSI said: "Authorised payment fraud should no longer be treated as a peripheral consumer protection matter."

There were more than 4 million cases of fraud in 2025 in the UK with £1.28 billion stolen, according to UK Finance, a banking industry body. To protect customers, regulations that require banks to reimburse fraud victims up to £85,000 were introduced in 2024.

Jodrell Bank cut 'weakens space defences'

Rhys Blakely Science Editor

Britain risks losing its cutting-edge ability to track hostile satellites with extraordinary precision if the government allows the Lovell Telescope at Jodrell Bank to cease operating, senior international scientists have warned.

The giant radio telescope, which has been in service for nearly 70 years, should be treated as a national security asset as space becomes a more important military theatre, researchers said.

Professor Simon Garrington, associate director of Jodrell Bank Observatory, has said that the 76-metre Lovell Telescope will fall out of use when government funding for e-MERLIN, Britain's national radio astronomy network, ends in March 2028. The Science and Technology Facilities Council, which awards public money principally on scientific grounds, said this week that it would not renew funding worth about £2.8 million a year. Scientists argued that the decision failed to account for the telescope's defence value, including a newly demonstrated ability to detect and track objects as small as a football in geostationary orbit, 22,000 miles above the Earth.

Professor Marco Martorella, a radar expert at the University of Pisa, said the technology could help Britain to monitor military satellites, identify suspicious manoeuvres by hostile states and close gaps left by conventional optical telescopes, which are obstructed by clouds and darkness.

By pairing American radar transmitters with Jodrell Bank's highly sensitive receivers, an international team tracked objects far smaller than those detectable by the radar alone.

Martorella said the combined system could detect targets measuring only tens of centimetres across. "There is no single radar in the world that can do that," he said. "Not even the best equipment the US has can do that by itself."

The giant radio telescope enables Britain to track hostile satellites

Martorella and his colleagues are to receive Nato's Science and Technology Excellence Award, the alliance's most prestigious scientific prize, for the work, which used a technique known as long baseline multistatic radar. They demonstrated the system this year, processing signals and displaying tracking results with a delay of only about two seconds. It would be relatively easy to use radar transmitters in the UK, rather than the US, making the system independent of foreign support, Martorella said.

Tony Beasley, director of the US National Radio Astronomy Observatory, described the research as "at the bleeding edge". He said: "If Britain wants a sovereign capability to understand what is happening in space, this is infrastructure it already has. In terms of telescopes that British scientific and military organisations have access to, this is yours, and it is a remarkable facility. He added: "There are dual-use applications for these facilities that are very attractive to other agencies and organisations in the country. Making sure you fully understand the impacts of closure across multiple different avenues is important."

Jodrell Bank has performed dual scientific and security roles throughout its history. In 1957, the Lovell Telescope tracked the rocket that carried Sputnik, the first artificial satellite, into orbit. During the Cold War it worked with the RAF, the Ministry of Defence and GCHQ to monitor Soviet spacecraft, missile launches and radar signals.

Garrington said that, although its steel structure dated from the 1950s, its receivers, data links and signal-processing equipment had been repeatedly replaced. "The telescope is hugely more capable than it ever was," he said. "There is no sense in which we are old-fashioned technology." He pointed to China's heavy investment in large radio telescopes, including the 110-metre Qitai telescope now under construction, as evidence that the technology retained strategic as well as scientific importance.

In defence of the plan, letters, page 26
The very definition of state-sanctioned shortsightedness, leading article, page 27

PAUL FRENCH/BNPS

Sea horse A rider cools off her mount in the water off Highcliffe Beach in Dorset, known for its views of the Isle of Wight and the 19th century, grade I listed Highcliffe Castle, which sits on the cliffs above. Riders mustn't dawdle if they want to make the most of the beach: it is closed to horses from 10am to 9pm every day between Easter and the end of September

Woman's 650 bows a day on retreat caused crippling pain

Will Humphries
Southwest Correspondent

A wellness coach who injured her back performing 650 prostrations a day during a months-long Buddhist retreat took her own life after enduring debilitating pain, an inquest heard.

Claire Rodway, 52, had been fit and active before she went to stay at the remote monastery off Scotland's west coast. The intensive year-long retreat involved her performing 650 prostrations — a bowing motion that involves fully extending the body on the floor — every day.

She also endured a disrupted sleep pattern as many teachings took place remotely from Nepal at 2am.

After five months the former nurse left the Kagyu Samye Ling Monastery on Holy Isle, off the Isle of Arran, suffering from severe pain.

Rodway, from Christchurch, Dorset, was later diagnosed with fibromyalgia, a chronic condition causing widespread body pain and fatigue.

An inquest at Dorset coroner's court heard she was found drowned in the River Avon on October 2 last year. She had left notes describing how the condition had "destroyed my life".

Her family claimed the retreat put vulnerable people's lives in danger as no risk assessments on participants' health were carried out.

However, Elise Jacobsen, a senior Buddhist nun known as Lama Zangmo, said Rodway was given advice that the prostrations could be modified, such as to a kneeling or sitting position, but said she preferred to do the full length movement. She said Rodway had completed the required 100,000 ngondro prostrations in five months, whereas others had taken years to do them.

Richard Middleton, assistant coroner, gave a conclusion of suicide and said he did not believe her death was preventable. He said he was satisfied the monastery had taken appropriate action to address issues when they arose. However, he added that it was "common sense" that it was possible that the "unearthing of trauma", completing 650 prostrations a day and a disrupted sleep pattern "could have caused the onset" of the fibromyalgia.

Drug-smuggling nurse avoids being struck off

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

A social media influencer has avoided being thrown out of the nursing profession after trying to smuggle £160,000 of cannabis through Birmingham airport.

Levi Whalley, who worked as a Botox and filler injector while also promoting herself on Instagram, was caught with more than 35kg of the class B drug.

She and her friend, Sophie Bannister, were returning from New York when Border Force officials found the drugs in their luggage. Whalley's suitcase alone was said to have contained 38 packages of cannabis.

Whalley, 32, from Blackburn, has almost 45,000 followers on Instagram, on which she posts photos from around the world. She avoided a prison sentence but the nursing regulator said it would press for her to be struck off.

However, a Nursing and Midwifery Council tribunal ruled that she should instead be suspended from practice for 12 months. The tribunal said that stripping Whalley of her licence would be "unduly punitive", noting that she had been experiencing a "very difficult" time when she tried to smuggle drugs.

During the hearing, the tribunal was told that Whalley had "always wanted to be a nurse from a very young age" and that she had worked in healthcare since she was 18. She qualified as a nurse seven years ago and went on to work at an eye clinic, where she was promoted to a management role. She later ran her own clinics as a "nurse injector" before moving to work at a private ophthalmology department.

Levi Whalley posts from around the world on Instagram and has almost 45,000 followers

Whalley was arrested in December 2023 and convicted of drug smuggling at Blackburn magistrates' court in February last year. Two months later she was given a 16-month prison sentence, suspended for 18 months, by a judge at Preston crown court. Bannister was sentenced by the same court to 20 months suspended for 18 months, with 30 days of rehabilitation and 200 hours of unpaid work.

Whalley told the tribunal that owing to personal factors she had not thought about the consequences of her actions and had made "a very irrational decision in the moment". Shortly before leaving New York with the suitcase, Whalley said, she panicked and did not want to go ahead, but received messages threatening her home and family.

Whalley said that she felt she had lost everything and had thrown her career away over "this very stupid decision".

The disciplinary panel ruled that given the "specific and unusual circumstances" surrounding Whalley's offending, her criminal conviction "was not fundamentally incompatible with remaining on the register".

TMS

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Burnham's the odd man in

There was criticism from Labour's female MPs after yet another man became their leader, though it was noticeable that most of them criticised this decision immediately after nominating Andy Burnham. However, despite being like every previous Labour leader except with a different accent, Burnham could actually be a victory for Labour's DEI. The ad man Rory Sutherland said at the *An Evening with The Spectator* live event that Burnham is a miracle when compared to recent PMs. "Andy Burnham didn't go to Oxford, isn't a lawyer, didn't read PPE and wasn't born in Surrey," Sutherland said. "That all makes him a diversity hire."

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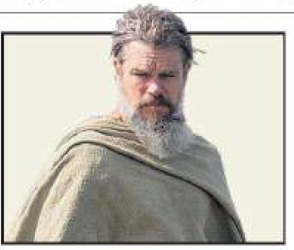
Burnham is not alone in coming up with risky new policies. The former Tory lord chancellor Sir Brandon Lewis has posted an idea on his Instagram where he suggested that hunting might be a way of ending food poverty. However, his chosen slogan of "Could shooting end food poverty?" was unfortunately open to misinterpretation. As one lobby veteran remarked: "The Tories have got bolder ideas than I thought."



REWARD FOR FAILURE
Back in January, Nigel Farage announced that the Reform train was leaving the Tory station. He said he would accept no more defections by Conservative MPs after the local elections. "We have no interest in rescuing political failures," he said. That policy doesn't seem to extend to former MPs after the news that Julian Brazier has now joined the turquoise wave. Brazier was last seen on a stage in Canterbury in 2017, becoming the first Tory to lose the seat in 107 years.

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HOLY GRAIL FOR HISTORY BUFFS
The furore surrounding the classicist Emily Wilson's scathing review of Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey*, above, has continued all week, but not all academics are serious when Hollywood touches on their pet subject. The historian Greg Jenner wrote on Threads that, when writing his MA thesis on movies about King Arthur, he contacted dozens of medievalists and asked them for their favourite films inspired by the period. You might have expected *Henry V* or *The Seventh Seal* to be the *bien-pensant* choice but you'd be wrong. The profs were much more likely to say *Monty Python and the Holy Grail.*

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Meanwhile, the author and journalist Andrew Hunter Murray has suggested that Odysseus is in fact the perfect hero for the start of the Andy Burnham era. "Actually thinking about it," Murray said on the Private Eye podcast, "Odysseus had a ten-year-plan as well.

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A WOMAN OF LETTERS
Commenting on our story the other day about how babies called Stephen and Steven are now outnumbered by new boys called Maverick, my colleague Andrew Billen told Times Radio that he thought it was time to revive some of our more old-fashioned names. "My auntie was Ethel and my grandmother was Vera," he said. However, he admitted that the latter had a small problem. Apparently she signed her letters with her initials, and her surname was Douglas.

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JACK BLACKBURN

Hiroshima fireball created new alloy

The atomic bombing of Hiroshima created a previously unknown material, scientists have discovered.

Researchers found the formerly unknown metal alloy hidden inside tiny grains of fallout from the 1945 blast.

They believe it formed inside the nuclear fireball, where temperatures of more than 7,000C instantly vaporised buildings, steel, glass and soil before everything cooled in moments.

The microscopic fragment was discovered inside a glassy particle known as a "hiroshimaite", recovered from beach sands in Hiroshima Bay almost 80 years after the world's first wartime atomic bomb.

Scientists say the alloy is made from a mixture of iron, chromium, nickel, manganese, molybdenum, silicon and aluminium, ingredients commonly found in stainless steel.

However, instead of forming the way those metals normally would, the atoms became locked into a new crystal structure as the fireball cooled at incredible speed.

Researchers say the discovery shows nuclear explosions can create materials that cannot form under normal conditions.

For the study, scientists from the University of Florence analysed 34 tiny glassy particles from Hiroshima Bay.

Using powerful microscopes and x-ray analysis, they searched the debris for unusual materials. One metallic grain, measuring a few thousandths of a millimetre across, immediately caught their attention. Although its chemical ingredients looked familiar, its internal structure matched nothing that had been recorded.

After comparing it with thousands of materials, the team concluded that they had discovered an alloy that was forged inside the fireball.

Writing in the journal Science Advances, they said: "We report the discovery of a previously unknown … alloy recovered from beach sands of Hiroshima Bay, formed during the [1945] atomic airburst."

The team says the finding raises the possibility that other undiscovered materials are hidden among the microscopic debris.

Studying how these materials formed could help scientists better understand how matter behaves under the most extreme temperatures and pressures.

The atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, codenamed "Little Boy", was the first nuclear weapon used in war. It was released at 8.15am on August 6, 1945, and detonated about 1,900ft above the city.

The blast unleashed the equivalent of about 15,000 tonnes of TNT and an estimated 60,000 to 80,000 people died instantly.

By the end of 1945, the death toll had risen to about 140,000 as thousands more succumbed to burns, injuries and radiation sickness.

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Auction expects feverish bidding

The famous white suit worn by John Travolta in *Saturday Night Fever* is set to sell for as much as $400,000 (£303,000) at auction.

It leads a sale of entertainment items including the rabbit suit from *Donnie Darko* and a prop piece of amber from *Jurassic Park* that will be auctioned in Los Angeles next month.

Propstore said its live auction, taking place from August 26 to 29, has a combined pre-sale estimate of about $10m (£7.6m).

Expected to lead the sale is Tony Manero's white three-piece suit, worn by Travolta in the 1977 disco classic *Saturday Night Fever*. The costume, which has an estimate of $200,000 to $400,000, was worn during the film's dance competition sequence and bears a handwritten inscription from Travolta.

Another of the headline lots is Frank the Rabbit's principal costume from the 2001 cult film *Donnie Darko*, estimated at $100,000 to $200,000. It is being offered at public auction for the first time, coinciding with the film's 25th anniversary.

A prop of a mosquito preserved in amber from *Jurassic Park* is also expected to attract strong interest and has an estimate of $100,000 to $200,000. It featured in the film's opening sequence, in which scientists extract dinosaur DNA from a prehistoric mosquito.

Other notable lots include the hands from *Edward Scissorhands*, Michael Keaton's batsuit from *Batman Returns*, a stunt axe from *The Shining*, and prosthetic werecat teeth worn by Michael Jackson in the *Thriller* music video.

Props on sale include John Travolta's suit from Saturday Night Fever and an axe from The Shining

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Boy is third UK tourist to die at Cyprus hotel in four years

Peter Chappell

A two-year-old who fell to his death from the window of a hotel in Cyprus is the third British tourist to die at the resort in four years.

King Evelthon Beach Hotel and Resort has come under criticism over the fatalities as the boy's father, a 37-year-old City worker from Essex, is due to appear in court today.

A source close to the family told The Times they were "living through an unimaginable nightmare" after the father was charged by Cypriot police with causing death by a rash, reckless or dangerous act.

The hotel near Paphos has been the scene of several tragedies in recent years, including the deaths of two other British holidaymakers. Ben Woods, 21, from Leigh in Greater Manchester, drowned in the hotel pool in July 2022.

Another child, Ruaridh Nairne, six, from Inverness, drowned the following year. A woman also died while swimming in 2024, the Daily Mail reported.

When a journalist visited the hotel this week, the large fourth-floor window through which the toddler fell on July 12 was still open.

The child's father was arrested and held in prison for eight days before being released on €20,000 (£17,000) bail. He appeared emotional as he sat in the dock on Tuesday accompanied by his parents, who have flown to Cyprus to support him, his wife and their daughter, five. He is banned from leaving the country before his trial, which is due to start next week and could last several months.

"It's a living nightmare for them, which keeps getting worse," the source added. "The idea that they could face a situation where the family has to return to the UK while the father remains in Cyprus is unfathomable. The psychological impact on him already is beyond comprehension."

The King Evelthon hotel has been the scene of several tragedies since 2022

The family were on the first day of their holiday when the boy fell 10 metres on to a veranda. Paphos district court was told the child fell through an open window when his father was swinging him from side to side in the corridor next to the family's room.

The father is understood to have denied that version of events and insisted that he was not swinging his son.

Police said a toxicology report showed the man had consumed one or two alcoholic drinks. If convicted, he faces up to four years in prison.

Petros Stavrou, the family's lawyer, made several requests during the eight days of his imprisonment for the father to be released to be with his wife when they had to inform their daughter that her brother had died. Instead, the delay meant that the father, according to reports, was forced to tell his daughter the news over FaceTime.

UK health and safety guidelines state large hotel windows should be restricted to an opening of 10cm or less. In Cyprus the window must be above a ledge at least 1.1 metres tall, a regulation with which the hotel complied.

Antonis Sivitanidis, general manager of hotel, said: "All of those deaths the police fully investigated and found no fault on the hotel's side. We are sorry for all the families and we offer them our sincere condolences and sympathy."

Detective warned over work affair

A senior detective has been found guilty of misconduct and given a warning after he had an affair with a colleague and kissed her in an unmarked police car.

Detective Sergeant Andrew Hedley, 52, admitted kissing his married partner after surveillance operations. At a Hampshire police misconduct hearing, he said he didn't disclose the affair because he was worried about the "detrimental repercussions" to both their personal lives.

Representing the force, Charles Apthorp said: "It is a very serious breach for a person to avoid disclosing something when you know it is important."

Giving evidence, Hedley said he had stayed in a hotel with the officer, who cannot be named for legal reasons, but never conducted any sexual relations with her when on duty.

Hedley was found to have committed misconduct, but the panel did not find it amounted to gross misconduct. He was given a written warning for 18 months.

Jewel thieves jailed over sledgehammer raid on store

Jessica Sharkey Crime Correspondent

Three men have been jailed after stealing £225,000 worth of stock in a smash-and-grab robbery at a jewellery shop in west London.

Robert Clarke, 50, Lee Ramsey, 46, and Deniz Mehmet, 28, all from Essex, were caught on video raiding Gregory & Co in Richmond in front of shoppers on January 31.

The video, which was widely shared online, showed the men smashing the shop window with a sledgehammer before grabbing jewels from the display and putting them in a blue Ikea bag as staff tried to fend them off. They then ran towards Richmond Green, and bystanders called the police.

Robert Clarke, 50, was caught on video raiding a jewellery shop in southwest London

The men were caught after officers looked at CCTV footage, carried out forensic analysis and recovered a vehicle believed to be linked to the robbery.

Footage released by the Metropolitan Police showed officers bursting into the bedrooms of Clarke and Ramsey to arrest them in the early hours of March 31. Bodycam footage showed Ramsey being detained and handcuffed on his bed. Mehmet was detained on a street on April 8.

The men were sentenced at Kingston crown court yesterday after admitting the offence at a previous hearing.

Mehmet, from Basildon, was jailed for five years Clarke, from Rochford, and Ramsey, from Harlow, were each given five years and three months.

After the raid, a spokesman for Gregory & Co said: "This has been deeply upsetting for us all, and we are supporting the police as they investigate who did this. We're a local, independent family jewellers, and have been in Richmond for more than 45 years. The public response to this incident has been overwhelming, and we are grateful for the support and kindness we've received.

"We are reassured that, overall, the good outweighs the bad as we look forward to reopening and getting back to normal soon."

Detective Superintendent Dan Mitchell, from the Met's Flying Squad, said: "Robberies of this kind cause real concern for residents and businesses in the communities that are targeted. It's they who feel the immediate impact.

"These sentences mark a significant step in what has been a detailed and determined investigation. I hope they demonstrate our commitment to tackling smash and grab robberies in London by going after those involved, wherever they are."

In March seven men were jailed for being part of a group that carried out a series of smash-and-grab raids at luxury stores across the capital. They stole more than £100,000 worth of goods over four months last year using bricks, sledgehammers and a Ford Fiesta to ram into doors.

They took watches, jewellery, fine art and safes containing cash, and used stolen vehicles as getaway cars.

Across the group, five successful burglaries of London shops were committed between May and July 2025, with a similar technique being used each time, Kingston crown court previously heard.

The Met said that it remained committed to tackling crimes such as ram raids.

Figures released by the force this month showed a 14 per cent drop in neighbourhood offences in the 12 months to June compared with the previous year — the equivalent of more than 35,000 fewer offences reported across London.

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

The Argentinian dancer and Royal Ballet principal Marianela Núñez with William Bracewell as Marguerite and Armand

Núñez proves she is beyond compare

Dance Debra Craine

Marianela — Timeless
Royal Opera House, London
(170 min)
★★★★☆

She calls it her love letter to the Royal Ballet but it's also a love letter to her audience. Marianela Núñez's programme at the Royal Opera House, comprising a series of divertissements sandwiched between two one-act ballets, is a golden opportunity for fans to see the ballerina who has delighted Covent Garden for 28 years showcased in a variety of guises. As an added bonus eight other Royal Ballet principal dancers joined her for the first night of *Marianela — Timeless*.

It kicks off with *In the Night*, Jerome Robbins's 1970 romantic confection in which three couples meet separately under a starry night sky. The choreography illustrates various shades of love in a succession of contrasting pas de deux. Fumi Kaneko and Vadim Muntagirov floated through the sweet, serene courtship of the first, Mayara Magri and Lukas B Braendsrod spiced it up in the earthier, more mature second and in the third duet Núñez and Matthew Ball resonated the most in the tender drama of their passionately fraught relationship. Chopin Nocturnes provide the music (though it deserved better than the below-par playing of the pianist Kate Shipway).

We end with Frederick Ashton's *Marguerite and Armand* (1963), the same story as *La traviata*, although Ashton distils the tale of the doomed courtesan and her young lover to its essence and tells it in flashback. William Bracewell, making his debut as Armand, brought elegant ardency and ravishing arabesques to the table, while Núñez's Marguerite, wearing a succession of stunning Cecil Beaton gowns, fell in love graciously and expired gracefully. Paul Murphy conducted the Royal Ballet Sinfonia, although Liszt's B minor Piano Sonata was not well served by the soloist Robert Clark.

In the fun-filled middle section, a delicious bonbon of duets. Núñez and Muntagirov went for broke in the bravura choreography of Marius Petipa's *Le Corsaire*, she grand and radiant, he displaying the purity and panache of a wondrous classical technique. Akane Takada and Calvin Richardson enjoyed the leggy coupling of Wayne McGregor's *Infra*, Magri and Ball embraced the joyous abandon of the balcony pas de deux from Kenneth MacMillan's *Romeo and Juliet*, while Kaneko and Braendsrod milked the slow seductive power of Christopher Wheeldon's *After the Rain*.

And last, but not least, of the bonbons, George Balanchine's glittering *Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux*. For this Núñez teamed up with the Royal's newest principal, Patricio Revé, who revealed a strong, neat technique. But the moment belonged to Núñez, whose effervescence and rich musicality were beyond compare.
Until Aug 2, rbo.org.uk

M&S spots gap in knickers market

Prue White Style Editor

These are not just knickers, these are red, lace, crotchless knickers. They are by Ann Summers and now stocked by everyone's favourite picky-bits retailer, Marks & Spencer, no less.

M&S has long been the nation's go-to for reliable underwear. Known for selling nude cotton-rich pants in the style of Bridget Jones (£12 for a pack of five), and a bra every two seconds, you'd be forgiven for assuming the outlet's offering was more vanilla than kink.

Indeed in April, the chain launched Body by M&S: a capsule range of lingerie to meet every sartorial need. Including bodies, shapewear, T-shirt bras, and yes, granny pants, the range had practicality at its core.

However, in a move that will surprise many and perhaps horrify even more, M&S has started stocking lingerie by Ann Summers — the British retailer that also specialises in sex toys. Included in the latest drop of "Brands at M&S" is a three-pack of "flirty" lace crotchless thongs for £20. If you are in any doubt as to what constitutes a crotchless thong, rest assured, it's not much. There is an intricate lace bodysuit, also crotchless at £36, and even crotchless sheer tights to "blend the sultry styling of traditional stockings and suspenders with the convenience of tights" for £12.

The "Brands at M&S" knickers by Ann Summers are priced at £20 for three

In March 2021, when Richard Price, the then managing director of clothing and Home, announced that the M&S was expanding to stock other brands, no one could have foreseen the expansion would mean crotchless pants sold alongside sausage rolls. A spokesperson for the retailer said "Our Brands at M&S strategy is all about giving customers greater choice through carefully selected third-party brands that complement our existing M&S offer."

A thread on Mumsnet, originated by a user who was offended by an advert for the crotchless thongs on Facebook, generated much debate. One user asked: "Who on God's green earth goes to M&S for sexy fun?"

You won't be choking on your meal deal at the checkout anytime soon, though. Crotchless thongs will only be available for purchase online. Delivery in a paper bag optional.

Female Navy chef sexually assaulted men and women

A female chef has been dismissed from the Royal Navy and jailed for 18 months for sexually assaulting two male and two female colleagues on a ship.

Bulford military court was told that Able Seaman Sian Dowsett, 25, a chef, targeted new crew members on HMS Dauntless, a destroyer. Assistant Judge Advocate John Atwill said: "You slapped a fellow chef on the buttocks as he was working on a document and slapped him again with some force on another occasion. While a colleague was topless and getting changed, you groped their breasts, pushing them and gripping her nipples."

Dowsett, who was said to have "bisexual tendencies", was convicted of six charges of sexual assault in March.

Sian Dowsett was described as "extremely intimidating" by one of her victims

Yesterday one female victim told the court: "I was assaulted by Sian Dowsett. ... She was an extremely intimidating character. She would scream and shout at people. I had so many sleepless nights when she was aboard."

One of Dowsett's male victims said that he was assauled in the ship's sick bay, adding: "I felt guilty that I let it happen but I didn't tell her to get off."

In mitigation, Michael Green said that Dowsett had recently been diagnosed with autism, which could cause "social exploitation [and] interpersonal misunderstanding".

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ZACHARY CULPIN/BNPS

Branching out Matt and Katie Priestley in Dorchester, Dorset, hire out trees for weddings instead of the traditional flowers

Tailor loses suit over ruined £1m wine collection

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

A master tailor and wine connoisseur ruined his own £1 million vintage collection, a judge has ruled, dismissing a claim against the supplier of high-tech chillers.

Tom Reimer, who once dressed the opera star Luciano Pavarotti, had sued International Food Services Equipment for £550,000 over claims that a leak caused condensation that ruined the labels and potentially the corks on a collection of thousands of bottles.

But a judge has now handed Reimer a £110,000 bill for legal costs after finding that the master tailor caused the condensation in the "wine wall" himself, either by boxing in part of the fridge unit or by repeatedly switching it off after his neighbours complained about noise and vibrations.

Reimer, a scion of a wealthy German family, built a lucrative career as a top tailor in Hamburg, where in the 1990s his company dressed Pavarotti in a white silk tailcoat as a contrast to his customary black tails and white tie.

Lawyers for the company, which is based in south London, had argued in court that the chillers were not faulty and that the only problem was that they had caused Reimer's neighbours to complain.

Matthew Winn-Smith, a barrister representing the company, had told the court that any damage to the wine probably resulted from Reimer "turning off the wine fridges because they were too noisy".

Reimer was said to have done so because he faced "considerable pressure" from his landlord and neighbours over noise from the £23,000 devices and their condenser units.

The tailor had accepted that the units had been turned off twice, but the judge found that it had been done "significantly more than twice".

Sitting at Central London county court, Judge Sarah Ellington said that Reimer had acted "unreasonably" in turning off the units without first notifying his suppliers. She added that the multimillionaire could have moved the wine into storage while the cooler units at his £8 million flat in Marylebone, central London, were replaced.

It emerged during the hearing that Reimer had amassed 20,000 bottles of vintage French wines that were kept at his properties in London and Hamburg. But he claimed the value of his collection in London was lost because of faults with three custom-made chillers that were installed in 2021.

The cooling system featured glass sliding doors and remote condensers. Reimer argued in court that a gap of less than half an inch between the doors of the units allowed cool air to escape and warmer air to enter, leading to condensation and mould growth on the labels. He also maintained that some of the vintages "probably" suffered significant cork damage, massively reducing the value of his 1,500-bottle London collection.

Tom Reimer outside court. He claimed that a leak in his high-tech chillers ruined his wine collection

Many of the wines were elite reds from the Bordeaux and Rhône Valley regions, including bottles of 1982 Château Mouton Rothschild, which can sell for more than £1,000, and 2012 Petrus, which can fetch about £2,000.

Rare wines are much less valuable if the labels are damaged because buyers are wary of taking a risk on the wine itself being ruined.

Dismissing Reimer's claim, the judge said that any damage to the wine bottles was probably caused by lack of adequate ventilation as a result of the condensers of the wine cooling wall being boxed in on Reimer's orders or by the tailor turning off the fridges due to the noise.

Detectorists buzzing after Bronze Age bracelets find

Three solid gold Bronze Age bracelets that may be worth more than £300,000 have been found by metal detectorists.

Alan Daniels and Andy Crammond found the bracelets, or torcs, in a farmer's field. Crammond joked that he almost had a heart attack when he unearthed the first one a few inches under the soil. Daniels quickly discovered the second, then the third 20ft away 20 minutes later.

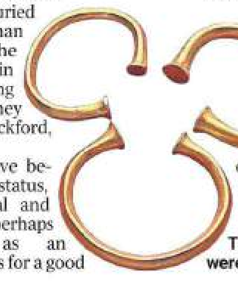
Despite being buried in mud for more than 3,000 years, the torcs were in pristine, gleaming condition when they were dug up at Blackford, near Carlisle.

They would have belonged to a high-status, wealthy individual and landowner who perhaps buried them as an offering to the gods for a good harvest or hid them in fear of a raid on their settlement.

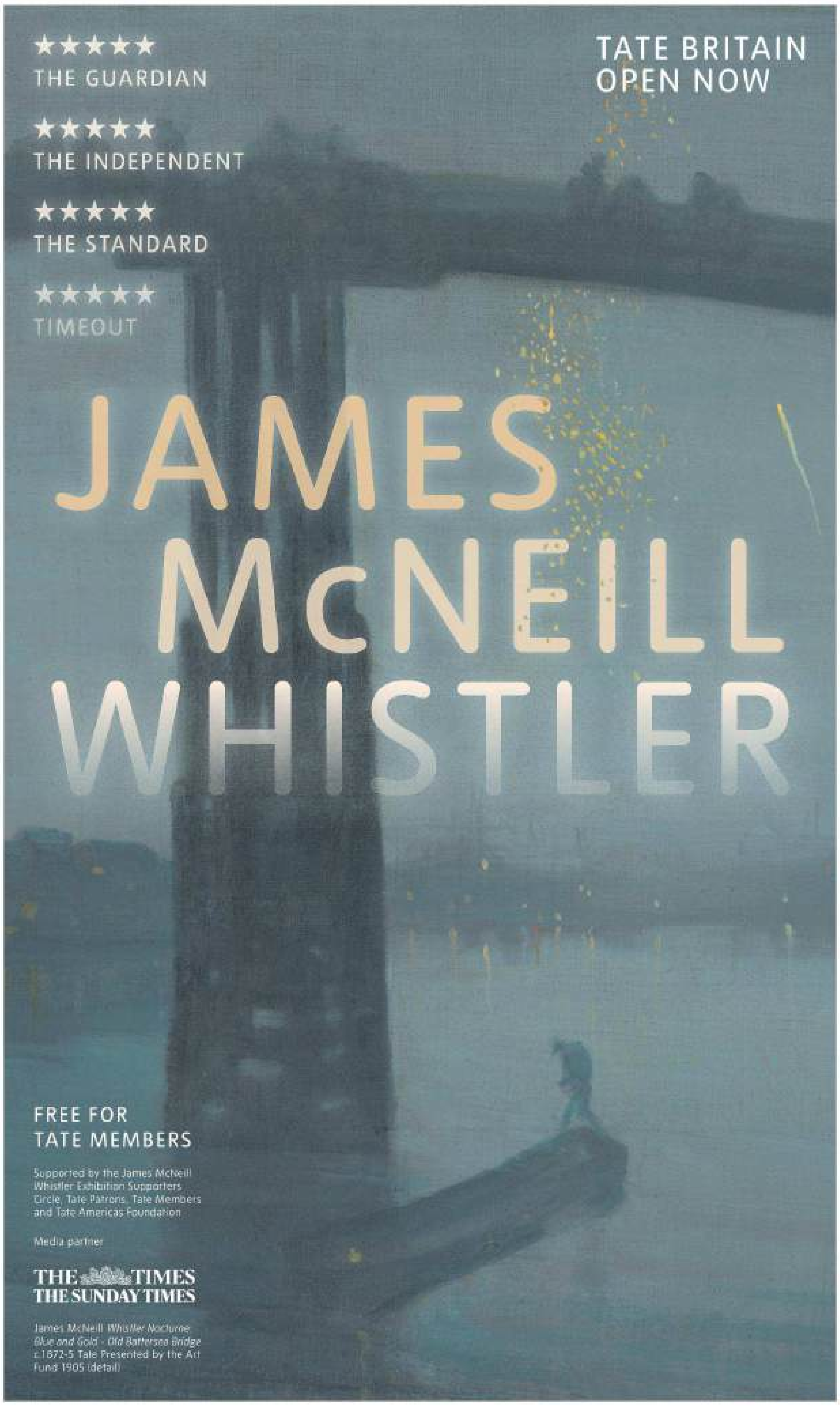
The torcs are now with the British Museum where a coroner will rule if they are treasure or not. If they are treasure a museum or institution will be given the opportunity to buy them for the nation, with the detecting duo getting a share. If nobody wants them they will be returned to the finders.

The torcs have been dated to about 1100BC and are at least 22-carat gold with a combined weight of 518 grams.

Crammond, 34, a gas engineer from Kilwinning, Ayrshire, said: "Detectorists dream of these things and that is how it still feels ... It is the find of multiple lifetimes."



The three solid gold bracelets were buried in a farmer's field



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Use AI sensibly or it will make you stupid
Emma Duncan
Page 24

Why fixing social care is everything to PM

The cause is partly personal but for Burnham the current system also sums up what's wrong with the way Britain is run

Patrick Maguire

@PATRICKKMAGUIRE

As he was driven to work on Wednesday morning, the prime minister rang his mother. They spoke about his father — her husband — while the cars and the outriders went up to Golders Green. That was the last thing Andy Burnham did before he spoke to England about social care. It was a speech about policy, yes — about Baroness Casey of Blackstock, a national conversation and an expedited review. But it was about Roy Burnham, too, and the people who look after him.

Roy lives in a nursing home. He has Alzheimer's disease. He does not know he is the prime minister's dad. Last Monday, as Andy left Buckingham Palace, the carers sat him in front of the television. They told him to look at the screen as his second son walked up Downing Street, having accepted the King's invitation to form another Labour government, and Eileen Burnham wept. "It's a family achievement," that son had told me, the day before he went into No 10. "Although he doesn't know it, it still makes me feel that we've kind of done something together."

And so on Wednesday morning Andy Burnham was determined to speak without notes — to show his words were something more than mere prescription. Ramsay MacDonald once sought a "doctor's mandate" to cure Britain's fiscal sickness, and in time this Labour leader might have to do the same if he is to fulfil his promises on social care. He began, though, by speaking as a son, about his father and his illness and what more could be done to make them better.

Hundreds of thousands of English sons and daughters could do the same, of course. With every passing month of Burnham's premiership there will be thousands more, all of them living a version of his life. He knows this and, says one of the No 10 aides, "feels the weight of his words on these issues".

To say this or that topic is "personal" for a politician is such a cliché it can be applied to any approach to any subject, entirely impersonally. Still, the car and the care home and every other little vignette from Burnham's private life partly explain why he has turned abruptly towards what others in his position would see as a brick wall and decided to sprint on regardless.

> To the prime minister, it looks like a twisted bundle of original sins

But only in part. If his and Roy and Eileen's story were unusual, he would not have had to give that speech.

Policy wonks like to talk about the "housing theory of everything". Point at a problem with the British economy — stagnant growth, low productivity, wealth inequality, overstated GDP — and the explanation lies in our dysfunctional housing market. If Burnhamism has an equivalent it is surely social care. To the prime minister, it looks like a twisted bundle of original sins: petty partisanship, privatisation and the death of municipal England. Untangle it, the argument goes, and you absolve the state of debts and obligations it ought never to have incurred in the first place. Fix this, finally, and all else no longer seems impossible.

Start with the politics. Much of what Burnham says and does now is best understood as the unfinished business or hard lessons of his final years in cabinet. Two important things happened then. On April 15, 2009, the 20th anniversary of the Hillsborough disaster, he spoke at Anfield as culture secretary. They heckled him, crying for justice, a chorus of disbelief in politics and politicians. By the spring of 2010 he was health secretary, with a brief to introduce a national care service. He tried. There were cross-party talks and proposals for a compulsory inheritance levy. Then the Tories kicked it to bits, so he failed.

Burnham had wanted a lasting, bipartisan solution. The alternative, he warned then, was "a random dementia tax, where people can see tens or hundreds of thousands of pounds wiped out by the costs of care, the loss of their homes, their savings and every ounce of their financial security". He never got his consensus. Nor did Theresa May in 2017. She ended up haunted by that coinage of Burnham's: the dementia tax.

The prime minister now says partisan politics was the block on progress. This week his chief of staff, James Purnell, wrote to advisers and officials in No 10. He mentioned Burnham's "determination to do politics differently" and hymned the virtues of "openness and collaboration". Experience has convinced the prime minister that a culture of "point scoring, not problem solving" creates perverse incentives for political sabotage and state failure. Promising to fix the apparently unfixable so early is a bid to force change.

KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH/PA

Andy Burnham announced his social care plan in a Golders Green care home

Then there are those other Burnham lodestars: greater public control of what he calls the "unaccountable state", and the disempowerment of local government. The prime minister wants a National Care Service, fully integrated with the National Health Service. What we have now is a mess of patchy and overstretched local authority services, charities and private providers — owned, in many cases, by American venture capital and private equity funds.

It is much too early to say what, exactly, the Burnham model would look like: Casey will tell us next year. But if Burnham's vision of England has an opposite, it is surely BlackRock making a handsome profit off your nan. Nor would councils be forced to bankrupt themselves to fulfil their statutory obligation to provide adult social care at the expense of everything else they used to do. And there is the prize. What Burnham wants, and believes in, is a demonstrative and can-do politics, both locally and nationally, greater public control and lasting reform.

Put this to the casualties of his reshuffle and they are decidedly sniffy. All the prime minister has done, recovering cabinet ministers argue, is bring forward Sir Keir Starmer's plans and Casey's review by a year. Even as they concede Burnham has mastered the little things as Starmer never could, Labour's fallen stars insist the big problems are unchanging. And the Tories won't collaborate on social care. Why would they? Now, if there's no early election, Kemi Badenoch will have 18 months to attack Labour for wanting to raise the taxes needed to pay for it all.

> He has mastered the little things as Starmer never could

They may yet be proven right. These warnings from the critics sound a bit like Theresa May, defending her own doomed social care plans: nothing has changed! Except, that is, the prime minister's appetite for political argument — and all the risks involved. And that, for Burnham, is precisely the point.

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Use AI sensibly or it will make you stupid

Technology may not put us all out of work but outsourcing our brains to bots can only be bad

Emma Duncan

If you're a besuited consultant whose selling point is your supposedly superior brain, it's embarrassing to have some of your output rumbled as AI slop. That's what seems to have happened to PwC Middle East. According to GPTZero, which sells AI detection software, PwC put out "thought leadership" reports featuring footnotes that referred to non-existent research and links to publications that failed to support the claims made — classic AI glitches.

Still, that doesn't set PwC apart from the competition. Earlier this year GPTZero outed a report from EY on loyalty points, as well as one from KPMG pleasingly titled "Redefining Excellence in the Age of Agentic AI".

Such tales are rather a relief amid the claims that the economy as we know it will shortly be incinerated by AI. Elon Musk says AI will produce everything that everybody wants within ten years so "money won't matter". (He also thinks there's a 10-20 per cent chance it will wipe out humanity, but that's a small price to pay.) Dario Amodei, boss of Anthropic and a more modest fellow, thinks AI could bring about GDP growth of 5-10 per cent a year. Such predictions depend on AI taking people's jobs, which I would welcome on a hot afternoon but would be troubled by on a longer-term basis.

Messrs Musk and Amodei, of course, are not objective observers. The first has just floated SpaceX, an AI company with rockets attached, and the second is expected to float his firm shortly. Investors are having doubts about their hyperbole. The value of SpaceX's stock is around half its post-flotation peak; the share price of Meta, which has also gone big on AI, has fallen by a fifth since the SpaceX float; the value of the entire Korean stock market, which is heavily weighted towards AI, has dropped by about two fifths since its peak in June.

Those doubts spring in part from the persistence of the gap between hyperbole and reality. The valuations of AI companies require them to transform the economy, but it's not happening. Professor Nick Bloom and colleagues at Stanford University surveyed 6,000 bosses in America, the UK, Germany and Australia, with similar results from all countries. Those in the UK reckoned AI had had a negligible impact on their firm's productivity over the past three years, and expected it to increase productivity by around half a per cent a year over the next three years. It had led to no reduction in employment so far, and they expected it would lead to a fall of half a per cent a year in the next three years. That is a normal result. Employment on average falls naturally among existing companies. Growth comes from companies yet to be created.

> Short cut may be easier but will never produce anything original

But whether or not AI wipes out jobs, it is changing the way we work. Lots of people use it, at home and in the office; and it's in the way we use it as individuals rather than in the prospect of mass unemployment that the danger lies.

I use AI as a research assistant but I've come to realise there are two serious risks involved. The more trivial one, as revealed by the trouble that the consultants have got into, is that it makes stuff up. The PwC pitfall can be avoided by checking anything it says with a reliable source, but when people use it they tend to stop thinking for themselves.

Scientists coined the term "cognitive surrender" for this phenomenon after asking a group of workers to use AI to help them answer difficult questions. A control group did not use AI. Those using it performed better than those who didn't when AI got things right, but they stopped using their brains as a reality check, so performed worse when it got things wrong.

The more fundamental problem is that AI makes you lazy. Your brain, like your muscles, needs to work to get stronger. Stop making the effort, and your capacities diminish. A study of doctors who used AI to do colonoscopies demonstrated that. They were less good at the job after using AI than they had been beforehand. Anybody who once navigated using paper maps and now uses Google Maps is familiar with the feeling of losing a skill.

AI narrows your horizons. If you let it feed you information, you're less likely to go and find stuff out for yourself. That crucial process of exploration takes you into unexpected areas and leads to interesting discoveries. The short cut may be easier but it's duller and will never produce anything original.

The tendency of AI to make people stupider is particularly dangerous to people whose brains are developing. Teachers are alarmed by what they see in the young. Professor Bloom says that in the Stanford maths department, homework scores are shooting up and exam scores are plummeting because students who use AI to do their homework don't learn from it. In economics seminars in which students discuss a paper they've been assigned to study in advance, they all seem to be making the same points, and when they're questioned they can't elaborate on them. "The light bulb came on for me, that instead of reading the paper the students are just feeding it into AI."

They will, of course, get no benefit from this; which points to an interesting development. University rewards brain over character, but in future the prizes will go not to the cleverest but to the most self-disciplined. Those who use AI intelligently and not excessively, who let it do their grunt work but not their thinking, who are prepared to strain their brains — they will do best, in education and life. Heraclitus got it right 2,500 years ago, and his perception is even more relevant in the age of AI: character is destiny.

Nigel Farndale Notebook

Meeting with Ann that put a cat among the puddings

Too soon to share a frivolous story about Ann Widdecombe? I think not, and suspect she would have thought not too, but you be the judge.

A few years ago, I went to interview her in her south London home for a magazine profile. As our photographer hadn't finished, she told me to head through to the kitchen and make myself a cup of coffee while I waited. I opened the fridge door looking for milk and was, in my evil journalistic way, delighted to see several family sized pots of tiramisu. This is definitely going in the piece, I thought. I have stumbled upon Ann Widdecombe's secret passion.

A few days after my article appeared, a letter arrived and I turned to the signature: "Yours furiously, Ann Widdecombe." I took a deep breath and read it from the beginning. "If, instead of sneaking a look, you had asked me about the contents of my fridge, I could have told you that the tiramisu belonged neither to my mother nor me but to a young Singaporean guest." The Widdecombe weakness, she continued, was for sherry trifle, not tiramisu. She would not even feed tiramisu to her cats.

"Do you realise what you have done, you bounder?" she concluded playfully. "I go to half a dozen political/charity/literary lunches or dinners a week and now I shall find a wretched tiramisu proudly presented as the dessert at every one and I shall have to smile and say: 'Oh, what a lovely surprise,' when I LOATHE the beastly stuff."

Mouse guests

Mice are both hygienic and highly intelligent creatures, and cute, which is why I use a humane trap. There was one with half a tail I released at the end of our garden recently only to find him back in the trap the next morning, blinking up at me. I took him to Longmoor, the nearby MoD range. Longmoor was where I also released Super Mouse. This one had polished off a whole box of Quality Street and also most of the pills and powders in our medicine drawer. I imagined him racing around like a nutter up there, possibly killing any fox that crossed his path, before — shivering and sweating — withdrawal symptoms kicked in. Cold mousy, it would be called.

Chess queen

Judit Polgar, the Hungarian chess grandmaster and the strongest female player of all time, was asked by Peter Magyar, the new prime minister of Hungary, if she would like to be her country's next president. She declined, and I am glad because it might have meant her withdrawing her services as a virtual coach on chess.com. There is something about Virtual Judit's Hungarian-accented English, at times firm, at times purring, often vaguely mocking, that makes my head spin. The other day she whispered into my AirPods: "Your knight is pinned and I can attack it. You do not want this."

Grammar and songs

I always feel sorry for well-educated pop stars having to insert some bad grammar into their lyrics to seem cool and edgy. Mick Jagger (LSE) couldn't "get no satisfaction", Chris Martin (UCL) sang about how the stars "was all yellow", Sting, a former English teacher, felt obliged to write "everything she do just turns me on".

But the next generation of rock gods won't have to, thanks to the education secretary Lucy Powell who has said that year 6 grammar and spelling tests are "too obscure". The spellings include the words "knight", "through" and "plaque". That latter can, though, be useful, as Gyles Brandreth found when opening a hospital in his constituency in 1995. The plaque read: "This plague was unveiled by Gyles Brandreth."

Perhaps, in readiness for the social media ban next year, year 6-ers should get copies of the Times style guide. I find the entries as addictive as scrolling on Insta. Here's one: "shambles", strictly speaking, means a butcher's slaughterhouse. And the plural of octopus is octopuses not octopi. And you serve in a ship not on it. Flick, flick, flick. But the rule about never using "Union Jack" other than in reference to a Royal Navy ship is mere superstition, along with the belief that it is always wrong to boldly split an infinitive.

THUNDERER

The regions need rewards for their creative endeavour

Theo Bamber

The East Lancashire Road was the UK's first purpose-built inter-city road. Opened in 1934, it runs between Manchester and Liverpool, two vibrant cities at the forefront of Britain's creative, cultural and industrial development for the last 150 years. They built global reputations on what their people created: music, art, journalism, culture. They also shaped our new prime minister. That creativity generates enormous value. The question Andy Burnham must answer is simple: who should benefit from it?

Too much of the value the creative economy generates is flowing to a small number of global technology companies, and not enough is staying with the people who make the work or, indeed, within the UK tax system. The government has the chance to reset that relationship.

The Competition and Markets Authority has powers to compel fair terms between platforms and the publishers, musicians and creators who depend on them. But the CMA has not had the political support required to use those powers fully. If you are going to face down the largest companies in the world, you need to know someone has your back. The new government must give the CMA that backing unambiguously and immediately.

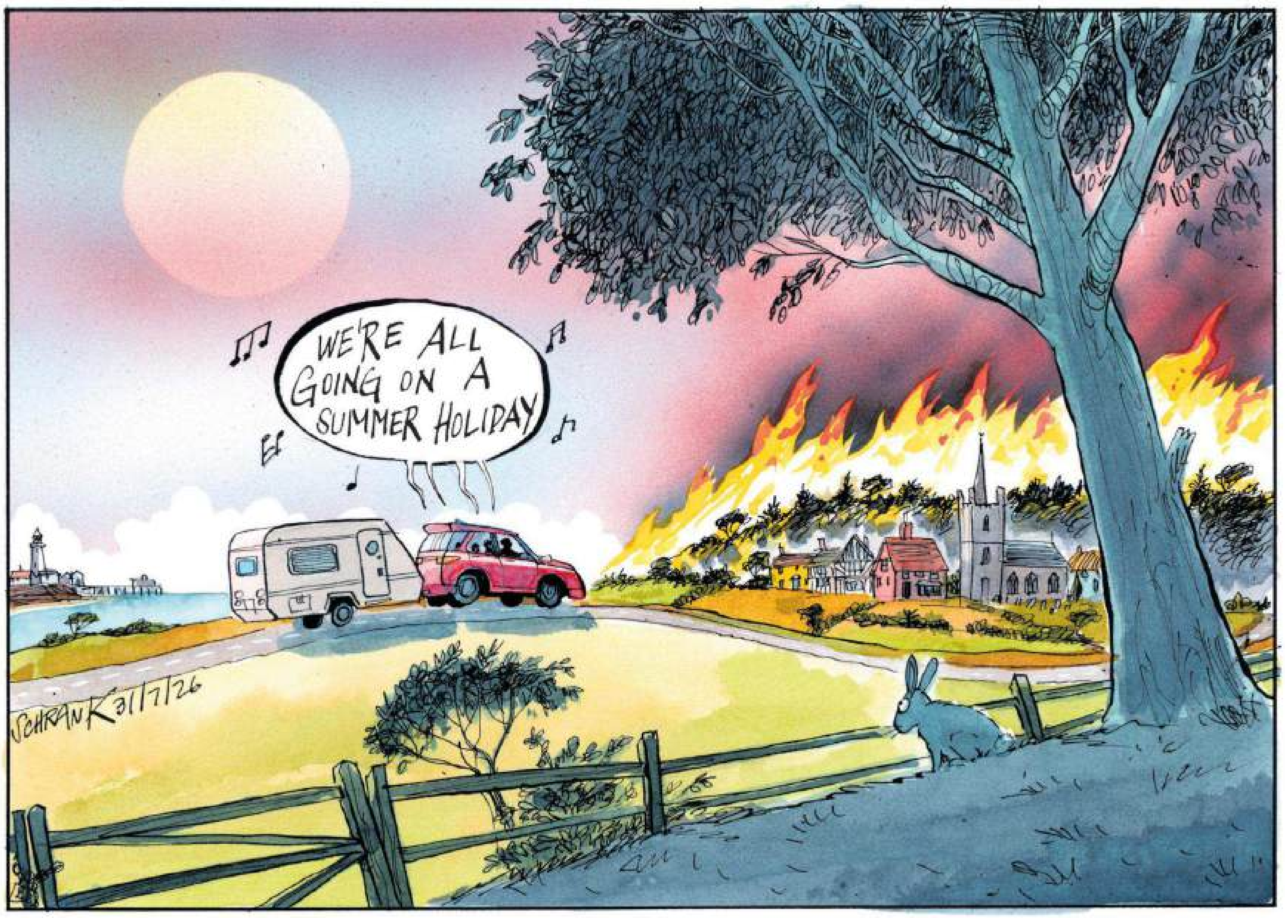
AI presents the same choice in sharper form. A thriving AI sector depends on access to high-quality content. Creators and publishers need confidence they will be rewarded when their work is used. The government must provide certainty that the UK's copyright framework will not be weakened.

This matters most at local level. As more powers move to local and regional institutions, the journalism that scrutinises their decisions becomes more important. News organisations in Manchester, Liverpool and across the country are providing trusted reporting that holds new power structures to account. These businesses are ready and willing to innovate. What they need is fair payment for their content, which would secure their futures and protect the journalism that devolution depends on.

These are not abstract questions. They are about whether Britain rewards creativity and enterprise or allows value to flow unchecked to a handful of global gatekeepers. They are about whether people have access to the trusted information that democracy requires.

The East Lancashire Road connects two cities that create work the world values. Burnham has the chance to make sure that work is properly rewarded. That starts with backing trusted journalism and the creative economy it's part of.

Theo Bamber is chief executive of the News Media Association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Fifa hysteria shows Europe's growth problem

Objection to Infantino's plan to sell off a chunk of World Cup business is rooted in a desire to sacrifice profit for purity

Gerard Baker

@GERARDTBAKER

Listen carefully. Those thuds you hear are the sounds of people with all the right opinions falling to their fainting couches at the latest outrage from Fifa and its boss.

The proposal — it's more commonly called a "scheme" or even a "scam" — by Gianni Infantino to sell off a chunk of the World Cup business to private investors has been greeted with the sort of reaction from cultural, media and political leaders you'd expect if Donald Trump announced he was offering to buy a stake in the royal family.

There's little to like about Gianni and I'm not going to waste a word defending his character or motivations. There's even less to like about Fifa as an organisation, or many of the predatory types who hang around the halls of American power — sporting, political or financial. But it's easy to let a natural revulsion to these characters colour your judgment on anything they come up with. The near-universal condemnation of the idea is reflective of a strain in the vast consensus of British cultural life that is anti-market, anti-capitalist and in the end, anti-success.

So spare me the anger, the denunciations, the rhetorical mounting of the high moral horse about the desecration of the "beautiful game". Spare me above all the antiquated English delusion that somehow "profit" is a filthy thing that soils everything it touches, a sentiment so at odds with the historical evidence and so undermining of opportunity it belongs in a museum of terrible ideas.

The World Cup is the world's premier sporting event. Fifa grossed perhaps $13 billion from the spectacle this year, mainly from selling TV rights. But that still leaves billions on the table. The event can get much bigger and reach larger audiences. The television companies face intensified competition for the rights from big tech companies who can pay much more. The potential is vast. And no, it doesn't mean we have to have the hydration breaks or the 27-minute half-time show.

When large amounts of money are left on the table, you can do one of three things: leave it there in the interest of some sort of spiritual purity; entrust it to not-for-profit financial ingenues to enrich themselves and allocate it according to personal and political whims; or let the market in to choose where the money goes. In just about every field it has entered, capitalism has a track record of being extraordinarily good not only at maximising the money on the table but at deploying it effectively and generating vast additional multiples from it.

It's true of course that in the process some people get filthy rich. But in expanding the total amount of money available they also create more for everyone. Sorry, socialists, but that's just how it's been. Greed isn't intrinsically good. But the number of occasions when it hasn't also enriched the virtuous and less avaricious are vanishingly small.

> The opposition to this is dismayingly English: an aversion to money

Of course I don't fully trust Gianni and his pals. But I'd be confident that, even as they fill their boots, money will be generated and channelled to fruitful causes; smaller nations could benefit richly, to football's and the public's benefit. The rise of African football in the past 20 years has expanded the game's horizons, brought joy to hundreds of millions and created new opportunities for talented young people.

I fear the opposition to this is rooted in something much more dismayingly English, European: the crimped, crippling, constipating aversion to making money, the sanctimonious desire to sacrifice profit for purity.

I'm old enough to remember what going to football matches was like before the evil profit motive dominated the game. I can remember standing (there weren't seats) with my feet drenched in urine from fans who didn't bother to queue for befouled, overflowing loos. I can remember the terror of the crush as we surged back and forward. I can remember, when I wanted to follow games from the safety of my home, having to listen to a tinny radio at three o'clock on a Saturday afternoon or catch a couple of minutes of a game on *Match of the Day* seven hours later.

But it was pure! The fields might have been like cow pastures, the stands like cattle sheds and many of the players like dray horses — but at least we had purity!

Many people don't like the rich owners who have helped make the Premier League the most successful, and lucrative, in the world. But does anyone think the game isn't much better? And couldn't be even better still? And of course the business can be regulated to protect against excess and ensure some of the additional revenue generated is shared widely. There's been much moaning this week about the "Americanisation" of football. But American sports are regulated by rules designed to share wealth and promote parity.

In the end it's a choice, I suppose. You can choose to seek more private money and watch the game grow and improve, even as some people get very rich off it. Or you can protect your cherished culture, wall it off from market discipline and financial opportunity and keep it pure, something from the past. Europe's insistence on the latter may doom Gianni's plan, but that doesn't mean the idea was wrong.

In fact, you can see the consequences on a larger scale when you look at the economies of America and Europe. In the US, the pursuit of ugly profit has produced rapid growth, dynamic technology, prosperity that is outstripping the world — as well as sports watched by hundreds of millions of people. In Europe, protecting itself from evil capitalism, there is stagnation, a crepuscular creep towards oblivion. It's worked so well for Europe's tech industries, its financial institutions, its energy supply, its industrial productivity, its income per head. I'm sure it will work for football too.

THE STATE OF IT USA

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Letters to the Editor

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Jodrell Bank plan

Sir, In response to Professor Jeremy Shears's letter (Jul 29) it is important to clarify what is happening at Jodrell Bank Observatory. The Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) has taken the difficult decision that from 2028 it will no longer support one project partly based at Jodrell Bank, e-Merlin. This decision does not remove all funding for Jodrell Bank Observatory, which is owned and operated by the University of Manchester. The university has confirmed that Jodrell Bank Centre for Engagement is not affected and remains open to visitors.

Although e-Merlin has made a significant contribution to science, STFC, under pressure from inflation and other cost increases, took this decision to protect investments in next-generation scientific capability, such as the internationally important Square Kilometre Array, which has its headquarters at Jodrell Bank and supports about 200 jobs.

These decisions will place STFC on a sustainable long-term footing, protect critical national capability and ensure investment remains focused where it can deliver the greatest long-term impact for researchers, businesses and the British public.

Professor Grahame Blair
Executive director of programmes, STFC

Compulsory voting

Sir, The key sentence in Daniel Finkelstein's article ("Why compulsory voting's such a rotten idea", Jul 29; letter, Jul 30) is: "To begin with, there isn't the slightest chance that forcing people to vote will increase their trust in politicians." Trust might come from making voting easier. Ever since Labour's Plant Commission on electoral systems in 1993, I have taken the view that compulsion should not even be contemplated until after the introduction of weekend voting has been tried and failed.

Lord Rooker
House of Lords

Sir, Daniel Finkelstein is right that compulsory voting is a "rotten idea". Australia, where voting is compulsory, has always had a small but significant "donkey vote". Studies have shown that this benefits those who come early in the alphabet as the donkeys simply mark the name at the top of the ballot paper. Low turnout in Britain is a serious problem, especially among the young. But it is best confronted through persuasion, not compulsion.

Sir Vernon Bogdanor
Professor of government, KCL

Corrections and clarifications

ipso. Regulated

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Reducing social care for young and old alike

Sir, Your articles (Jul 30) on the challenge posed by the increasing demand for social care did not mention the evidence-based opportunity for reducing the need for social care by at least 10 per cent.

The normal biological process of ageing is not the main reason for the disability and dependence that creates the need. The Oxford Longevity Project has identified three other processes, all of which can be influenced to reduce the need for social care. First there is loss of fitness, caused primarily by 45 years of sitting at work and in the car. Second there is disease: the major diseases are not the result of our parental genes but of the physical and social environment in which we have lived since birth. The third factor is social pressure from ageism and, especially, deprivation.

Fortunately the evidence is strong that it is never too late to increase fitness, reduce the risk of disease, including that of dementia by almost half, and mitigating the effects of the social determinants of ageism and deprivation. The health and social care committee has laid the policy foundations with its report on healthy ageing, and the NHS has launched a programme called Live Longer Better. Every individual and community needs to take urgent action.

Professor Sir Muir Gray
Oxford Longevity Project

Sir, I agree with Tony Batten (letter, Jul 29) that it is extraordinary that teenagers are claiming personal independence payments for conditions such as anxiety and ADHD. Disability has become a huge industry, with 18 per cent of young people aged 16-24, and 20 to 25 per cent of Cambridge students, officially recognised as disabled. About half of these are mental health conditions.

The principle of helping those in need is honourable, but as with immigration, when the numbers are overwhelming the threshold and criteria for help have to be modified. More than 20 per cent of those aged 16 to 24 now self-identify as neurodivergent, such as having autism, ADHD or dyslexia. I am not convinced it is right to include these lifetime characteristics as a disability. There will always be those at the very severe end of these conditions, who do need help. But the grey area between the severely affected and the "neurotypical" is growing to unmanageable levels. We are doing young people a disservice by labelling them disabled and offering them benefits, rather than helping them into work.

Dr Fiona Cornish
GP, Cambridge

Sir, I registered online to participate in Baroness Casey of Blackstock's "big conversation" about social care, only to find that I was only allowed about 20 words, starting "We should ..." This can hardly be defined as a "conversation" or be described as the democratic involvement of the people.

Dr Pamela Grant
Goring-on-Thames Berks

Sir, Many family members dedicate much of their lives to supporting their loved ones. They will give up jobs and social life to be able to care for their relatives. There is an untapped reservoir of siblings and friends who are focused on their own lives and pay little attention to the sacrifices of these carers. A little thought would go a long way to encouraging carers. Words of thanks, small gifts or even respite care would help carers immensely.

Andrew Lydon
East Horsley, Surrey

'Hard hat' careers

Sir, It was refreshing to hear the PM talk about "hard hat" careers and how we should encourage more young people into trade apprenticeships (news, Jul 28; letters, Jul 29 & 30). What we need now is support for the people who will be hiring them.

The vast majority of this sector consists of small and medium-sized enterprises, many of them sole traders. Research from Screwfix shows that they want to take on apprentices but each stage of the process is too complicated, from the paperwork, to hiring, to managing apprentice workload. Too often, this puts them off. Planned financial grants, welcome as they are, are a case in point.

Employer support up to £8,000 is split across different schemes, each with its own criteria. The result: 48 per cent of tradespeople who took on an apprentice last year claimed no funding because the system was too complex. Funding should be seamless and incentivise taking on young people, not throwing up barriers. Direct HR support to them via colleges or providers should be funded and approaches such as flexi-apprenticeships should be expanded. We must think like the time-pressed tradesperson and support them.

John Mewett
Chief executive, Screwfix

Sir, Contrary to Michael Gove's comment "Labour's education policy is 'bring back stupid'" (Jul 30), I believe a more inclusive approach to cover the technical, mechanical and creative subjects alongside the academic would prevent young people becoming disenfranchised at school. As a trainee teacher who graduated in creative arts, I was taught to consider the different ways young people learn — aurally, visually, manually — and to inspire them. I found that approach remarkably successful as it allows children to find a niche in which to excel.

Jo Humphreys
Lymington, Hants

Sir, I loved teaching English, and many small business employees in my area — all of them my ex-pupils — remember Steinbeck and Shakespeare as life-enhancers. Specific skills are another remit. Both should exist.

Pat Rudkins
Earls Colne, Essex

Tactful travellers

Sir, I agree wholeheartedly with Edward Lucas that "with Brits named among the worst travellers, it's up to us all to respect cultures and lessen our impact" ("Tourism isn't simply transaction: tread lightly", comment, Jul 30). He points in particular to "our role as ambassadors for our countries". I can well remember how, in July 1968 when I was aged 14, I took the bus with my father from Cromwell Road in London to Heathrow, as one then did. Having just taken my German O-level, I was on my way to Bremen for a two-week exchange visit with my new chum Hans-Albrecht. Seated in the front row of the top deck of the bus, Dad solemnly told me that I would be an ambassador for my country, and that that above all should steer my conduct.

The Rev Matthew Hutton
Chedgrave, Norfolk

Letters to The Times must be exclusive and may be edited. Please include a full address and daytime telephone number.

BRONZE AGE BURIALS IN DUNSTABLE

FROM THE TIMES JULY 31, 1926

A discovery of unusual interest has been made during excavations in one of the round barrows at Dunstable by the University College and Hospital Anthropological Society. Five years ago a group of medical students from the College took up the archæological work in the Dunstable area that had been interrupted by the death of Mr Worthington Smith, a well-known local antiquarian. They excavated one of the five knolls and discovered that it had been opened several times previously and cleared of everything except a few flint chips and bone implements. Last year another of the knolls was excavated, but it yielded little more than the one previously dug.

This month the work was resumed on knoll No 5, the most northerly, and it was found to be quite intact. No less than ten intrusive burials were found near the surface, apparently of middle Bronze Age, some of them cremated and others not. But they appear to be contemporaneous, because there was a close association between a Bronze Age cinerary urn and one of the bodies — a typical robust, broad-headed man, 5ft 8in in height. Eventually the primary burial of about 1200BC was found in an elliptical hole cut in the chalk — the bones of a slenderly built woman of Mediterranean type, 5ft 2in in height, of middle age, lying on her right side sharply flexed. Many years before her death her left forearm had been broken near the wrist.

Professor Elliot Smith said that the feature of most interest was the skull, which presented a condition of advanced symmetrical thinning that is extremely rare in Europe, but was very common in the aristocracy of ancient Egypt from the fourth to the 19th dynasties. In 1907 he discussed this peculiar incidence, and arrived at the conclusion that the thinning of the skull was probably the result of wearing heavy wigs for long periods of time. "We know nothing of the kinds of headdress worn in the Bronze Age," he added, "but if this theory is valid the condition of the Dunstable lady's skull indicates that she was accustomed to wear either a wig or some other heavy type of headgear."

The remains are now being studied at University College, but will eventually be housed in the Dunstable Museum.

THETIMES.COM/ARCHIVE

'Buy British' stance

Sir, The arguments for using procurement as an instrument of industrial policy are much more nuanced than Oliver Kamm suggests ("Healey's 'Buy British' plan is a fast track to economic decline", Jul 28). The US has consistently used procurement funding to support the development and trialling of new technologies, particularly where early applications are in defence, such as software, AI, communications and electronics, but without prejudice to the operational procurement decisions that come later. A similar approach, along the lines of the recommendations in the report of my review commissioned by Theresa May in 2017, "Leveraging Public Procurement to Grow the Innovation Economy", would benefit both the public sector and the wider economy.

David Connell
Cambridge Judge Business School

Breakfast banter

Sir, Andrew Billen suggests that the lot of Naga Munchetty and her fellow breakfast presenters is not always a happy one (Times2, Jul 29). He says that they get up at 4.30am, squabble over who gets the biggest interviews and then have to banter with co-presenters "while feeling permanently knackered". I can assure him that the production teams, who work through the night to get these programmes on air, feel a lot more knackered than the presenters. Nor do they have the consolation of being paid £360,000 a year "with a healthy sideline in freelance gigs". That must make Munchetty and co perk up a bit.

Neil Bennett
BBC reporter 1971-2006; London SW12

Chicken and egg

Sir, The finding that "Organic free-range eggs 'are worst for the environment'" (Jul 29) highlights how industrial-scale farming involves trade-offs between carbon emissions and animal welfare. This is not the case for small-scale farming, as the French town of Colmar can attest. Its local government has been handing out free chickens to residents since 2015: carbon emissions are lower through reduced food waste, the hens are happier, and so are the people.

Eugene Malthouse
Research fellow, University of Nottingham (and very small-scale chicken farmer)

Prayer for rain

Sir, My late parents heard this simple prayer from farmers in the Fens during the 1950s. Perhaps we should invoke it now: "O Lord we pray for rain, not a tearing driving rain that harrows out the heart of nature but a gentle sizzling sozzling rain that goes on all day and most of night. Amen."

Adrian Dixon
Cambridge

Beats at the bar

Sir, The letter from the tuba player (Jul 30) who counted rests, played her notes and went to the pub afterwards reminds me of drinking in the Britons Protection pub across the road from the Manchester Concert Hall. The brass players would come rushing in during the performance, counting rests while also drinking a pint, and then dash back to play their notes. Impressive timekeeping.

Jan Cilliers
London N13

Daily Universal Register

UK: Greater Manchester mayoral election result declared; population estimates by marital status and living arrangements from Office for National Statistics.

Nature notes

The heatwave tipped into drought; much of Britain turned tawny. Sports pitches and over-mown lawns were bleached white as their shallow-rooted grasses died. Meadows fared better. With their rich diversity of root networks and healthy, moisture-retaining soil, Britain's meadowland (found on road verges, railway embankments and environmentally managed churchyards) can survive quite harsh conditions. The roots of common plants such as knapweed and bird's-foot-trefoil reach down a staggering two metres into the ground to find water. Tufted vetch also digs deep but has other drought-survival skills. As a scrambler it hooks onto taller plants and not only shelters from the sun but exposes less of itself to the hot earth; and since it can fix nitrogen from the air, its nutrition needs are minimal.
JONATHAN TULLOCH

Birthdays today

Emilia Fox, *pictured*, actress, *Silent Witness* (2004-26), 52; **Victoria Azarenka**, tennis player, former world No 1, 37; **Michael Biehn**, actor, *The Terminator* (1984), 70; **Baroness (Angela) Billingham**, shadow spokeswoman on culture, media and sport (2010-13), 87; **Kenny Burrell**, jazz guitarist, 95; **Will Champion**, drummer and songwriter, Coldplay, 48; **Geraldine Chaplin**, actress, *Doctor Zhivago* (1965), 82; **Antonio Conte**, footballer, Italy (1994-2000) and manager, Chelsea FC (2016-18), Tottenham Hotspur (2021-23), 57; **Norman Cook (Fatboy Slim)**, DJ and record producer, 63; **Jonathan Dimbleby**, broadcaster and historian, 82; **Lord (John) Dyson**, Master of the Rolls and head of civil justice (2012-16), 83; **Daniel Evans**, co-artistic director, Royal Shakespeare Company, 53; **Edward Gillespie**, lord-lieutenant of Gloucestershire, 74; **John Goodbody**, sports news correspondent of The Times (1986-2007), 83; **Evonne Goolagong Cawley**, tennis player, Wimbledon singles champion (1971, 1980), 75; **Karl Green**, musician, Herman's Hermits, *I'm Into Something Good* (1964), 79; **Fergus Henderson**, chef, writer, *The Whole Beast* (1999), 63; **Robert Balchin, Lord Lingfield**, chairman, Institution for Further Education, 84; **Andrew Marr**, journalist, editor-at-large at the New Statesman, presenter, *The Andrew Marr Show*, BBC 1 (2005-21), 67; **JK Rowling**, author of the *Harry Potter* books, 61; **Wesley Snipes**, actor, the *Blade* film trilogy, 64; **Sir Mark Thompson**, chairman and chief executive, CNN Worldwide (media company), chairman, Ancestry (genealogy company), director-general, BBC (2004-12), 69; **Lord (Nicholas) True**, shadow leader of the House of Lords, 75; **Roy Walker**, comedian and broadcaster, *Catchphrase* (1986-98), 86.

On this day

In 1910 Dr Hawley Crippen and his mistress, Ethel Le Neve, were arrested for the murder of his wife. It was the first use of wireless telegraphy in the arrest of criminals.

The last word

"Consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative." Oscar Wilde, Irish writer, in the Pall Mall Gazette, 1885.

Benefit of Doubt

Baroness Casey has drawn attention to the fact that nearly one in four Britons are self-reported as officially disabled. She is right to query if the net is cast too wide

When the government seeks answers on knotty institutional failures or seemingly unfixable social problems, it has a tendency to call for Baroness Casey of Blackstock. The crossbench peer, who has decades of experience in social policy, has long displayed an ability to examine the evidence and cut through layers of equivocation and excuses. Her ensuing analysis very often involves dragging difficult questions into the light, half-buried truths that society has experienced but not previously formally acknowledged.

Her 2016 review of integration, for example, found that social cohesion had suffered as a result of historically high immigration and a laissez-faire approach in government to promoting shared British values. Her 2023 review of the Metropolitan Police Service, after the murder of Sarah Everard, exposed misogyny, racism and vetting failures in the Met. And her 2025 national audit of group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse highlighted a shocking institutional culture in which young victims of rape and abuse were not only left unprotected by the authorities but often actively criminalised as "child prostitutes".

Now she is leading a review of social care, the conclusion of which has been brought forward by one year, to 2027. Its "Big Conversation on Care" will, she says, ask the public "to get involved in making the tough choices that have been dodged for decades" by examining who deserves support and how the country as a whole can fund adult social care more fairly. Yet Casey has launched the conversation herself with a striking and frank observation on how the disability welfare net has been widely stretched to the point where it could become unsustainable.

In a radio interview, she reflected on figures raised by the Family Resources Survey, run by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). This is a self-reported survey in which respondents are asked if they have a mental or physical illness that has lasted, or is expected to last, more than a year. They are also asked if this reduces their ability to carry out daily activities. If the answer is "yes" to both questions they are deemed disabled. Casey observed that, in this voluntary survey, roughly 16.8 million people met this DWP definition of disabled. "I don't buy it," she said. "I would qualify, and I'm sitting here right now. I'm not disabled, but I could qualify if I answered those questions based on my medical records."

The DWP is quick to point out that such a figure — nearly one in four of the population — does not mean that all such respondents are eligible for disability payments: there is a separate, formal claims process for the personal independence payment (Pip) and its associated benefits. Yet it does indeed represent those who can now consider themselves disabled, according to a vaguely defined metric. And that, unfortunately, is reflected in the rising numbers of working-age claimants granted Pip, most frequently without a face-to-face interview. The fastest growth is being seen in young people with mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression.

Although Pip is being examined under the Timms review, its uses and potential misuses also touch on Casey's broader question of "who should we be looking after, and how?" The Pip bill is heading for more than £40 billion a year by 2030. As she emphasises, there are people dealing with "very significant disabilities" who are struggling to have their needs met, and require more help than they are getting. But the broadening of Pip access, and the blurring of categories between the grievously afflicted and those working-age claimants at the milder end of mental health problems, risk taking much-needed resources from the former group and creating a trap of dependency for the latter. A national conversation, and far sharper clarification, are long overdue.

Rising Tide

A new surge in antisemitism shames the UK and must be taken seriously

The UK has been crowned with an ignoble achievement. Last year it experienced the largest surge in antisemitic incidents out of seven countries with significant Jewish populations outside Israel. According to a report by the J7, the Large Communities' Task Force Against Antisemitism, there has been a 136 per cent rise in incidents since 2022 across Australia, Argentina, Canada, France, Germany, the UK and the United States. Some countries reported a fall in such events last year but in Britain the rate rose by 5 per cent.

The report found that last year was the deadliest for anti-Jewish attacks in the diaspora in more than three decades. Violent incidents were up by 97 per cent compared with 2022. In the past year there has been a series of fatal attacks globally including the Bondi beach shooting at a Chanukkah event and the Heaton Park synagogue attack during Yom Kippur. In March, Jewish ambulances in Golders Green were firebombed. These incidents are only the surface of a much deeper hatred that has been festering, and has recently intensified. The task force concluded that antisemitism had reached levels not seen since the Second World War.

That the UK has been singled out should not be a surprise. Ever since the October 7 terrorist attack on Israel, and the ensuing war in Gaza, antisemitism has been spilling into everyday events. The frequent marches through central London have featured an undercurrent of anti-Jewish and anti-Israel sentiments. Social media has become a cesspit of hatred, thanks to the refusal of the big technology companies to act to stop it spreading. Marina Rosenberg, one of the authors of the report, has rightly said that antisemitic attacks "start with words on social media".

The normalisation of this dark atmosphere was captured by one incident this week, when the London borough of Hackney decided to end its decades-long twinning with the Israeli city of Haifa. This performative act by the Green-led council was bad enough, but it set a deadline for Haifa to respond of October 7 — the anniversary of the single worst killing of Jews since the Holocaust. It speaks to a total incomprehension and lack of empathy on the part of Zoë Garbett, the mayor of Hackney. She has duly apologised for picking that date, but will press ahead with the de-twinning.

During his premiership, Sir Keir Starmer took credit for the announcement of £250 million to increase police patrols and security in Jewish communities. As prime minister, he also commissioned Sir David Bell, a retired senior civil servant, to investigate antisemitism in education that will conclude this autumn. The police have been more proactive in rooting out hatred in protests. Andy Burnham must continue in this vein, while finding ways to hold the social platforms to account.

There remains a deeper problem, however, which is what to do about the depressing reality that too many people in this country hold unacceptable views when it comes to Jews. Stopping the hatred spreading is the first step, but better education must be a part of this too. That requires a more focused effort from councils, schools, universities and employers as well as the government. It is deeply depressing that the oldest hatred is continuing to find new life. Routine security at Jewish places of worship is a common sight that should shame Britain into action.

Myopic

The end of observations at Jodrell Bank would be a disaster for British space science

Saving a measly £2.8 million a year by shutting down a world-famous research institution is the very definition of state-sanctioned shortsightedness. Jodrell Bank's renowned Lovell Telescope, the UK's largest, can reach into the depths of the universe and help map dark matter across billions of light years, yet the bean counters at the Science and Technology Facilities Council cannot see the value of a thriving, historic brand on their own doorstep. By withdrawing funding for e-Merlin, the UK's national radio astronomy network that is headquartered at Jodrell Bank, they're looking down the wrong end of the telescope.

Almost 80 years after Bernard Lovell turned a field in Cheshire into the global centre of radio astronomy, the landmark remains at the heart of British scientific excellence, attracting talent, inspiring youngsters and asking the most profound questions. A Unesco world heritage site, it signals ambition to the world, but its discoveries also have uses for defence and national security.

Axing its funding would be a grave error. No wonder nearly 80 per cent of early-career physicists are considering leaving the UK to pursue research abroad. No wonder the Royal Astronomical Society is "shocked and dismayed" and Professor Brian Cox, of the nearby University of Manchester, spoke of "devastating and irreversible cuts".

The UK's annual welfare bill is about £350 billion. Thus the saving from ceasing operations at Jodrell Bank equates to about five minutes of welfare spending. Or the amount spent every 15 minutes servicing national debt. Surely, unless the UK is shutting up shop as a country that does serious science, the government can find three million quid to fund the nation's foremost observatory? The last time Jodrell Bank came under threat, in 2008, The Times ran a campaign to defend it. It's a shame to have to do so once again.

World

Embattled Putin faces curse of ‘black August’

The president has good reason to fear what is traditionally seen as a time of turmoil, writes **Marc Bennetts**

April is the cruellest month, according to TS Eliot, but it is the onset of August that many Russians fear.

Known as “black” or “cursed” August, the eighth month of the year has traditionally brought turmoil to Russia, from an attempted coup by Soviet hardliners in 1991 to the sinking of the Kursk nuclear submarine in 2000, President Putin’s first year in power.

Subsequent Augusts brought more misery, including deadly floods and wildfires, terrorist attacks, plane crashes and an explosion at the Sayano-Shushenskaya hydroelectric power station in 2009 that killed 75 people. In August 2024 Ukrainian troops swept across the border into the western Kursk region, bringing the Kremlin’s war home to Russia.

Putin has good reasons to dread this August. Portrayed for years by Kremlin propaganda as the only politician able to ensure national security, his decision to invade Ukraine in 2022 has resulted in almost daily strikes on the Russian heartland. Oil facilities have gone up in smoke, while vast warehouses belonging to Wildberries, the country’s biggest online retailer, have also been targeted in an attempt to cripple the banking system.

As Russia burns, Putin’s regime is under the most serious combination of military, economic and political pressures since he came to power more than a quarter of a century ago.

Disastrous foreign wars played an important role in the collapse of the tsarist and the Soviet regimes and comparisons with the situation in today’s Russia are unavoidable. Widespread doubts about Putin’s mental state have added to Russians’ concerns. “He was always reasonably sound of mind, not detached from reality. Now, I don’t know,” a source in Moscow who is close to the Kremlin told The Times.

President Zelensky claimed last week that members of Putin’s inner circle had told Kyiv and its western allies that the Russian leader bore sole responsibility for the war. He gave no other details.

Tatiana Stanovaya, an exiled Russian political analyst who is an expert on the Kremlin, said the Russian elite was losing faith in the regime’s abilities to tackle the challenges facing the country. “While Russia was previously confident that the country could at least avoid losing the war and coast along on inertia for quite some time, the elites are now gripped by horror at the system’s impotence in the face of mounting problems,” she said.

President Putin meets State Duma deputies at the Grand Kremlin Palace

Although Stanovaya said there was little, if any, hope that economic and social strife would force Putin to call off the invasion of Ukraine, she said his regime was at risk of disintegrating.

“The situation is like a seized bolt [that is rusted into place]: no matter how much force is applied, it remains immovable, while the rest of the structure bears the strain. Pressure does not alter Putin’s stance; rather, it increases the risk of deformation and cracks in the surrounding system,” she wrote in an article that was published by the US-based Carnegie think tank.

Yet, if Russia is suffering, the same holds true for Ukraine and there are no grounds to suspect that Putin’s army is on the verge of total defeat. Russian troops still control about one fifth of Ukraine, while Russian missiles pound its towns and cities every day. Shortly before he was dismissed by Zelensky as the Ukrainian commander-in-chief, General Oleksandr Syrskyi warned that a turning point in the war was still “a long way off”.

In truth, no one knows what, if anything, will prove the final straw for Putin’s regime. The regime’s collapse, if it comes, may be brought about by a “black swan”-style event such as the mutiny in 2023 by Yevgeny Prigozhin, the Wagner mercenary chief.

In 2014 Gleb Pavlovsky, the late Kremlin spin doctor who helped Putin secure power before turning against him when he realised he wanted to rule for life, said it was “impossible” to predict how long the regime would be able to maintain power, but that its end would come with dizzying speed. “When it falls, it will fall in one day,” he told The New Republic website.

While Ukrainian attacks are jangling nerves across the country and putting strain on the economy, they are unlikely to be playing a huge role in shifting opinions, said Nikolai Rybakov, the leader of Yabloko, the only antiwar party in Russia that has not been outlawed by the Kremlin. “Everyone says this is bad, but they all draw different conclusions. Some lean towards peace, while others lean towards a strengthening of Putin’s position. They become more aggressive,” he said.

Yet dissatisfaction with Putin is clearly rising. Even his official approval ratings slumped 5 percentage points, to 66 per cent, in a single week this month, the lowest since the start of the war, according to FOM, a government-affiliated pollster.

Abbas Gallyamov, a political analyst who was once a speechwriter for the Russian government, claimed the poll was part of the Kremlin’s plan to cover up an even steeper decline in backing for the Russian leader.

“This figure of 66 per cent is around twice as high as the true number,” he claimed. “And thanks to this poll, which everyone is writing about, the whole world is convinced that the majority of Russians support Putin. And when the right time comes, FOM will announce that the rating has started to rise,” Gallyamov, who has been designated a “foreign agent” by the Kremlin, said.

Amid the relentless Ukrainian strikes, some hardliners appear to be taking refuge in worship of Joseph Stalin, the Soviet dictator whose reputation has soared under Putin. At least 24 new Stalin monuments or busts have been unveiled in Russia and occupied Ukraine since the start of the war and more than half of them went up last year, according to the Communist Party.

A new monument to Stalin that appeared in the city of Cherepovets last week was the fourth to be built in the Vologda region in the past two years. Georgy Filimonov, the regional governor and a member of the ruling United Russia party, has said that Stalin’s purges were “a necessary tool for consolidating power”, a nod to Putin’s campaign of political terror.

If this August turns out to be the blackest yet for Putin, his fall from power would be unlikely to usher in a new era of democracy and human rights in Russia. With the leaders of the liberal opposition dead or in exile, he would almost certainly be succeeded by a member of the existing security or political elite.

Little has changed in that respect since Pavlovsky, who died in 2023, was asked more than a decade ago what kind of regime would inherit power after the sudden collapse of Putin’s rule.

His reply? “A copy of this one.”

Deep impact The clear waters of the Aegean coastal district of Cesme have made

Trump forced to delay key cabinet vote after Republican rebellion

United States
George Grylls Washington

President Trump has said he may have to postpone his nomination of Todd Blanche as attorney-general after a rebellion by two Republican Senators.

A vote to confirm Blanche was delayed at the eleventh hour after John Cornyn and Thom Tillis, the senators for Texas and North Carolina, indicated they were not ready to back him. The Republicans have a 53-47 majority in the Senate, so even a small rebellion can cause problems for Trump.

Cornyn and Tillis are standing down after November’s midterms having failed to secure Trump’s endorsement for their primaries.

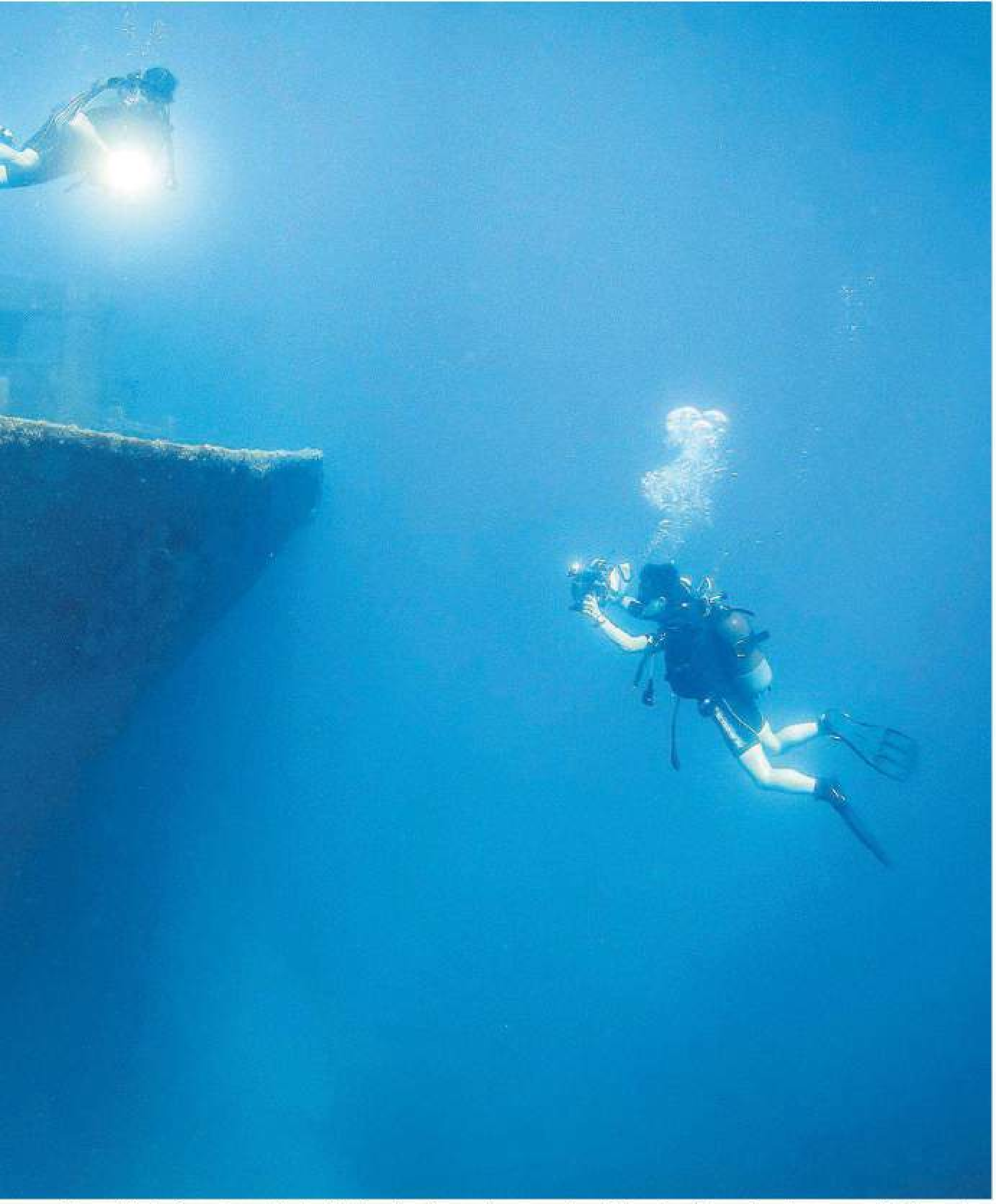
In a post on Truth Social yesterday, Trump said the political careers of Cornyn and Tillis had been “ended” by his refusal to endorse them. He could re-nominate Blanche once they step down next year, he said.

“Todd Blanche is a STAR, and everyone knows it!” Trump wrote. “He has the potential to go down as one of the Greatest Attorney Generals of All Time. However, John Cornyn, of Texas,

Pope Leo: I love the US but don't identify as American
Page 31

Mass killer inspires a new generation of extremists
Page 32

MAHMUT SERDAR ALAKUS/ANADOLU/GETTY IMAGES



it one of Turkey's most popular destinations for divers, who can explore rich marine life, underwater caves and shipwrecks

and Thom Tillis, of North Carolina, both of whom I refused to Endorse, and whose political careers have been ended by my action, are refusing to vote for this Great Nominee, who will remain, in any event, as Acting.

"Remember, both Cornyn and Tillis voted for Merrick Garland, and others, too numerous to mention. I have no objection to temporarily withdrawing Todd's name, if they do not do the right thing, and putting him back after Cornyn and Tillis are out of office."

Blanche, Trump's former personal lawyer, has been nominated to succeed Pam Bondi as attorney-general, traditionally a non-partisan role.

However, Cornyn and Tillis are refusing to support Blanche until he officially drops the $1.776 billion Anti-Weaponisation Fund which was announced by the Department of Justice (DoJ) this year as a way of funnelling money to "victims" of the Biden administration such as the insurrectionists of January 6.

The fund was announced as part of a settlement reached by Trump with the DoJ after he sued the Internal Revenue Service over the leak of his tax returns.

Todd Blanche, the president's former lawyer, is acting attorney-general

The news prompted a massive backlash, however, and Blanche announced that the DoJ would drop the fund. But the senators want him to formally rescind it and to restrict part of the agreement that would appear to offer Trump and his eldest sons immunity from future legal prosecution and tax audits.

The judiciary committee was due to vote on Blanche's nomination on Wednesday night. Charles Grassley, the Republican senator for Iowa and chair of the committee, pulled the vote after a day of negotiations.

Trump suggested Cornyn was refusing to back Blanche because the president endorsed Ken Paxton, his rival, to run for the Senate in Texas in November. "I don't know, maybe John Cornyn is upset with me because I didn't endorse him," he said. "I don't know what it is, but I haven't heard that there's a problem."

Cornyn insisted he was loyal. "I've voted with him [Trump] 99.3 per cent of the time," he told MS Now yesterday. "That has nothing to do with it. This is about making sure that even if you're the president, you don't get favourable terms from the government, like protections from audits."

In order for Trump to re-nominate Blanche next year, the Republicans will need to defend their Senate majority in November's midterms. Polling suggests this is far from certain.

US socialists aim to shut jails and ditch presidents

Its ideas may be radical but the movement is gathering support and already wields power, reports **Katy Balls**

The interview quickly caught fire. Megan Romer, co-chair of the Democratic Socialists of America, stepped before a sceptical audience, Fox News viewers, to talk about her organisation's vision. It's quite a list.

"Abolish the Senate?" the host asked. "True," Romer replied.

"Replace the presidency and Supreme Court as we now know them?" "Yep."

"Abolish ICE?" "Absolutely."

"Abolish borders and give amnesty to anyone currently in the US illegally?" "As a long-term plan, yep."

"Defund the Pentagon?" "Absolutely."

"Abolish prisons at least in large part?" "As part of a long-term programme, yep."

"Government or public ownership of most large corporations?" "Yeah, absolutely."

Meet the DSA, the largest socialist organisation in America and one that is gathering momentum and sending centrist Democrats into a tailspin.

A group founded more than four decades ago with a mission to promote left-wing economic policies is being accused by Democrats of hijacking their party and risking their hopes to take back the House of Representatives and the Senate in the midterm elections in November.

This week the Senate minority leader, Chuck Schumer, dodged a question on whether the group had a place in the Democratic Party. Others have been more forthcoming. Josh Gottheimer, a New Jersey congressman, claims DSA members "are not Democrats" and wrote that his party had no room for "anti-American bomb throwers who oppose our ideas, values and leaders". John Fetterman, the senior senator from Pennsylvania, said the DSA represented "anarchy" and Democrats should call them out.

This is getting difficult to do as their grip on the party grows. Last year the DSA member Zohran Mamdani won the New York mayoral election. He joined the group in 2017 after being drawn in by its pro-Palestinian stance.

While some thought it could be a one-off, a mix of the city's unique electorate and Mamdani's communication skills, others have followed. Mamdani backed three candidates, all DSA members, in last month's New York primaries to pick candidates for the November election, and all won. Chants of "DSA" were heard across New York as the mayor declared it evidence his election was the beginning of a political movement.

HOT GIRLS
-FOR-
MELAT
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Melat Kiros, a rising star of the democratic socialists

DSA candidates have won other primary contests, largely in safe Democratic seats. In Colorado Melat Kiros beat the 30-year incumbent, Diana DeGette. In Washington Janeese Lewis George, endorsed by the DSA, won her contest. Next week Abdul El-Sayed, who has links to the DSA, will go up against the incumbent Democrat, Haley Stevens, in Michigan. The group has ties to Bernie Sanders, who identifies as a democratic socialist.

A recent poll suggested that four in ten Americans would consider voting for a DSA candidate for president.

Members' policy aims are nothing if not ambitious. In their manifesto they name the "capitalist economic system" as "the cause of violence, unemployment and a climate crisis that poses an existential threat to life on Earth".

To remedy it, they call for a 32-hour working week with no reduction in pay or benefits; the end of economic sanctions to punish governments that act independently of the US, such as Cuba, Venezuela and Iran; and extending full voting rights to people with criminal convictions and to non-citizens.

Perhaps their most radical proposal, however, is to abolish the Senate and replace "the president and Supreme Court with an executive and judiciary chosen by and subordinate to Congress". This would upend the constitution's separation of powers and transform the American political system.

Even DSA members will admit their boldest ideas are unlikely to happen soon. Realistically, a handful of DSA candidates are expected to make it to Congress. Yet the group could shape the party's direction in coming years.

Democrats compare it to "the squad" of 2018. After that year's midterm elections, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez posted a photo alongside three like-minded congressional colleagues, Ilhan Omar, Ayanna Pressley and Rashida Tlaib, with the hashtag "squadgoals". They served as a progressive faction, which others later joined, holding their party's feet to the fire on issues from environmentalism to Medicare.

If the Democrats retake the House in November with a narrow majority, the DSA could push for a more radical agenda. The early focus is likely to be healthcare and Israel. Of the DSA's top priorities, ending the war on Iran, abolishing ICE, taxing the rich and universal healthcare are most regularly cited.

As Darializa Avila Chevalier, the democratic socialist who was one of the winners in the New York primaries, put it: "I'm running to invest our taxes in our babies here at home, not in bombs to kill kids abroad."

The problem for the old guard is that now the socialists have found a way in, it will be hard to get them out.

Oprah closes her school for girls in Africa

South Africa
Jane Flanagan Cape Town

Oprah Winfrey is to close her boarding school in South Africa, which she founded nearly two decades ago after promising Nelson Mandela she would help educate disadvantaged girls.

In its place, Winfrey, 72, said she would fund scholarships for the girls to attend some of the country's top academic schools.

The Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls, south of Johannesburg, was built at a cost of about $40 million. Facilities include science and computer laboratories, a 600-seat theatre, a wellness centre and a beauty salon.

Two more year groups will graduate before the facility is passed to the local education authority.

The site opened in 2007, seven years after Mandela, South Africa's first democratically elected leader, asked Winfrey for her help in uplifting girls whose opportunities had been limited.

Winfrey claimed the academy was her "greatest legacy". The chat show host said the new scholarship programme would continue her mission beyond a single campus.

More than 1,000 girls have graduated from the school since it opened. Many have credited their academic achievements with transforming their own families. However, the academy's early years were overshadowed by scandal. Within a year of opening, a dormitory matron, Tiny Makopo, was charged with abusing pupils.

She was acquitted in 2010, a verdict Winfrey described as "devastating".

JAMES BROOKS/AP

Soup of the day A berry gazpacho topped with petals is among the bizarre concoctions being developed in the test kitchen in Noma, the Copenhagen restaurant regarded as one of the world's best, where diners pay about £500 a head without wine

Revolution triggered by Gen Z has been hijacked by Kremlin

Madagascar
Jane Flanagan Africa Correspondent

It's a familiar script across Africa. Youth-led protests rail against corrupt leaders; the president falls; the army steps in, promising a return to civilian rule — and then the Russians arrive.

Madagascar is the latest country to follow that path. Last October, after weeks of unrest over shortages of water and power, President Rajoelina fled the island state. A colonel took over, promising elections would come. Within weeks, mercenaries had arrived from Moscow to shore up the new junta.

In the heady hours after Rajoelina's ousting, jubilant young protesters believed they had changed their country's future. But nine months later, with no firm timetable for a return to civilian rule, they fear one rotten regime has been replaced by another, and that their revolution may do more to advance the Kremlin's interests than their own.

Fanilo, a 22-year-old medical student who joined last year's demonstrations, feels bleak. "No one listens to us any more," he told The Times from Antananarivo, the capital. "I don't really trust this new regime, and I feel my country is sinking even further. The power cuts have come back, and the government is making even more absurd decisions."

Rather than work on a timetable towards an election, the junta's leader, Colonel Michael Randrianirina, has instead hosted Russian delegations and flew to Moscow in February to meet President Putin, breaking with decades of policy in which Malagasy leaders looked first to Paris, their former colonial power. Russia has since sent advisers and weapons, and backed a new pro-Moscow party.

Mercenaries of the Russian Africa Corps are training Malagasy troops

"There was a demand for security, and Russia answered it," Thierry Vircoulon, of the French Institute of International Relations, said. He described the regime as "paranoid" about a counter-coup, a fear exemplified in April when prosecutors announced they had foiled an alleged plot to kill Randrianirina. Vircoulon estimates that about 100 mercenaries of the Russian Africa Corps, the successors to the Wagner group, are in Madagascar, guarding the president and training his troops.

There has been alarm in France, given its loss of influence in its former colonies of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, where military juntas expelled its troops and then turned to Moscow.

Madagascar recently expelled a French diplomat over an alleged destabilisation plot, amid rumours, denied by Paris, that French mercenaries were operating on the island.

For Moscow, the strategic location and mineral wealth of the island have become increasingly valuable as the war in Ukraine, the conflict with Iran, and disruption to global shipping have reshaped international trade. The island sits astride the Mozambique Channel, through which almost a third of the world's crude oil passes, and it holds large deposits of graphite, cobalt, nickel and rare earth minerals critical to the manufacture of batteries, electronics and military technology.

In another clear shift, this month the parliament in Antananarivo handed control of fuel imports to a new state company, ending a 25-year system run by western firms. Analysts said this would pave the way for imports of sanctioned Russian oil, exposing Malagasy businesses to western penalties.

Moscow has also proposed building fuel-storage facilities on the island and has expressed interest in a disused naval site overlooking the shipping lanes between Africa and the Indo-Pacific.

For Russia, it is something of a homecoming: in the 1970s to 1980s Madagascar's Marxist government aligned with the Soviet Union, which armed the island and supplied its oil. Yet for many Malagasy, the renewed geopolitical interest in their island is no comfort.

The island has lurched between political crises and fragile civilian governments since independence from France in 1960. Rajoelina, 52, the ousted president, first seized power with the backing of the military after protests in 2009. He went on to win two elections before being toppled by protests himself. He now lives in exile in Dubai.

Such volatility has repeatedly been exploited by Russia across Africa, as it steps into political vacuums and offers embattled rulers protection in return for influence and access.

It is also not the first time protesters have been duped by an army casting itself as an ally. In Egypt in 2013 and Sudan in 2019, popular uprisings were absorbed by the generals who claimed to back them.

Sariaka, 42, who was among the demonstrators last year, said: "I don't trust [the junta's] promises … the mafia system is deeply entrenched at all levels of the state."

US map misplaces every African country

United States A map of Africa used by the US State Department at a conference in Brazil put every country in the wrong place, to the dismay of delegates.

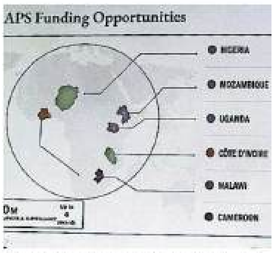
Reuters saw a video of the presentation given at the Aids 2026 conference in Rio de Janeiro, which shows the map in a presentation about the State Department's new health agreements. The map contained an artificial intelligence watermark that indicated it was made with OpenAI tools.

The State Department said it took full responsibility for the confusion caused and that the map had been produced by a team member who changed the slide deck before the event.

The map showed Nigeria, where the US has several hundred troops, landlocked in the Sahara Desert. Mozambique, which is in southeastern Africa, was relocated to the Horn of Africa and Ivory Coast in west Africa was on the other side of the continent.

Screenshots of the map first appeared in a Substack post by Emily Bass, an Aids expert, and were shared on LinkedIn, where one post had 40,000 views.

The State Department said the discussions at the conference were "substantive and constructive" despite the map and that it remained committed to fighting Aids with real results.



The State Department presented the map at an Aids conference

Bunker hospitals plan

Poland Four underground hospitals will be built in north-central Poland to prepare for potential crises amid growing concerns over the war in neighbouring Ukraine. The project, announced by Piotr Calbecki, marshal of the Kuyavian-Pomeranian region, is expected to be completed in 2029 at a cost of about €63 million.

Factories power down

Hungary Big electricity consumers such as battery and car manufacturers are being asked to use less power between 5pm and 10pm because of the heatwave. Peter Magyar, the prime minister, said a shutdown of the Paks nuclear plant and a 20 per cent jump in demand in evening peak hours could cause a "critical" situation by Monday.

Pennies from heaven

Germany A Bavarian millionaire is offering parents a gift of €500 to have their children baptised to reverse the decline of the Catholic Church. Peter Löw, who has eight children, said his plan would give children from 40 families "a guardian angel". In some states Catholics are subject to a "church tax" of up to 9 per cent of their income.

I don't identify as American, says Pope

Vatican

James Imam

Leo XIV, the first American Pope, has said he has "great love" for the United States but does not identify as American, after declining President Trump's invitation to attend the US's 250th anniversary celebrations.

The Pope, who was born in Chicago, told NBC there were "so many things" he appreciated about the US, praising "the sense of freedom, the sense of opportunity, the sense of having invited, for generations, people from around the world to be part of America".

However, although he said there was "great significance in being the first American Pope", he insisted that his nationality did not define him, describing himself as a "pastor of a universal Church".

"I think of myself more as the Pope who happens to be American. Not to belittle what it means to be an American," he said in the interview in the gardens of Castel Gandolfo, the papal summer residence near Rome.

The Pope, 70, who was born Robert Prevost, has often seemed at ease with his American identity. He is known to eat peanut butter sandwiches when working late, and recently wore a baseball cap bearing the logo of the Chicago White Sox, given to him by a newlywed American couple visiting the Vatican.

Before his election 14 months ago, his older brother, John Prevost, who lives in a Chicago suburb, said they communicated daily, often playing word games on iPads. The Pope delivered part of his inaugural mass at the Sistine Chapel in English.

The Pope wears a Chicago White Sox cap, his home city's baseball team

During the interview, the Pope, who has Italian, French and Spanish ancestry, also highlighted his multi-ethnic roots. Describing his grandparents as immigrants, he said: "On my mother's side, we have people who were both slaves and slave owners."

Leo raised eyebrows in the US this year when he declined an invitation from Trump to attend Independence Day events on July 4. Instead, he visited the Italian island of Lampedusa, a key entry point into Europe for migrants, where he urged the Continent's leaders to rise to the "momentous challenge" of handling migration.

The decision was widely interpreted as a snub to the Trump administration, with whom the Pope's relationship has become increasingly strained.

In April, JD Vance, the vice-president and a Catholic convert, warned Leo to "be careful" when discussing matters of theology. Marco Rubio, the secretary of state, was dispatched to Rome the next month in an apparent effort to ease tensions. Officials described the talks as "cordial" and "frank".

Some of the Pope's recent comments have been interpreted as subtle criticisms of Trump. On July 3, accepting a prize with a video message at an outdoor ceremony at the National Constitution Centre in Philadelphia, he said he hoped that ideals of "unity, justice and peace" held by America's founding fathers would continue to guide the US.

His interview with NBC was given on the sidelines of celebrations for the 800th anniversary of the death of St Francis of Assisi. The event included a performance from the Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli, accompanied by young singers from around the world.

Asked whether Americans would soon see him in their country, the Pope replied that "they will see me there", adding: "Nothing is set in stone, but I certainly hope to be there soon."

Migrants storm into Spanish territory

Thousands of migrants poured across the border from Morocco into the Spanish territory of Ceuta yesterday after security forces were overwhelmed (David Sharrock writes).

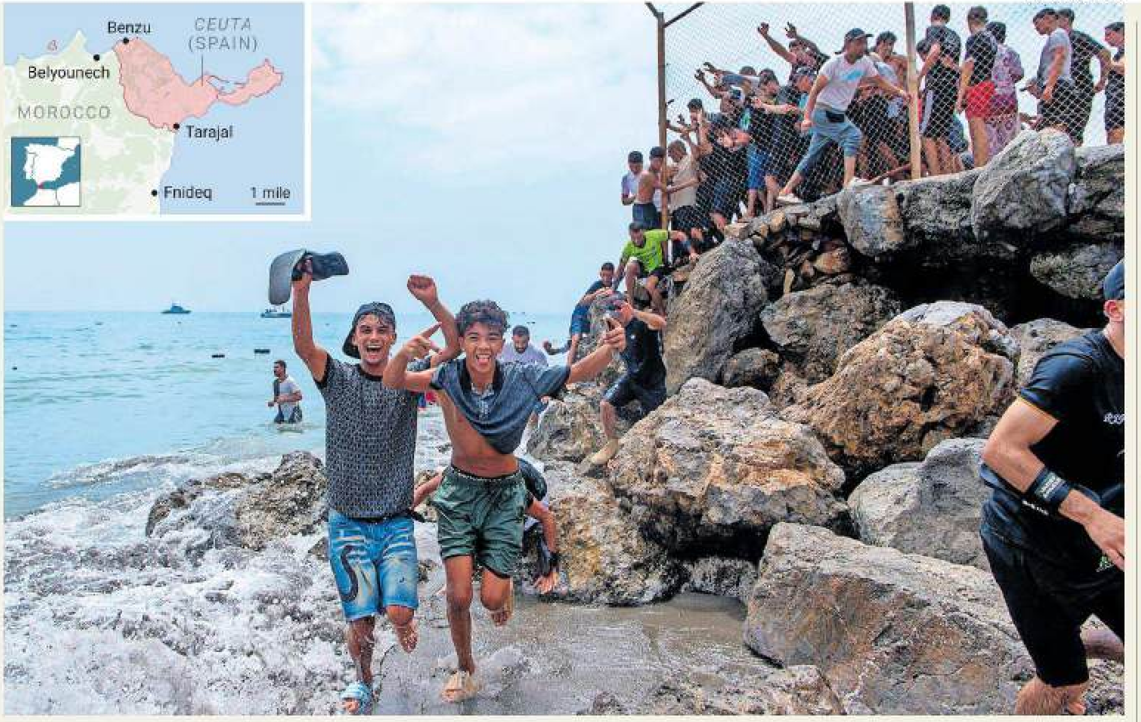
Spanish Civil Guard officers looked on helplessly as crowds of young men and some entire families made their way along the Tarajal border breakwater to reach Spanish territory. Video images showed them crossing on foot, swimming or climbing around barriers on the coast, facing no opposition from Moroccan border security.

The throngs of mostly young men smiled and cheered, some shouting "Viva Espana!" or kneeling to kiss the ground as they arrived on Spanish soil.

An estimated 20,000 migrants have crossed the border this week, most of them arriving yesterday. Seven bodies have been recovered from the beaches of Ceuta, the news agency EFE reported.

Ceuta and its sister city of Melilla, further east along the Mediterranean coast, are the only European Union territories that share a land border with Africa. As such, they are frequent flashpoints in the Continent's illegal immigration crisis.

The latest images appeared to show the biggest influx since the spring of 2021, when Morocco sent more than 8,000 migrants to cross the border into Spain in response to the transfer of Brahim Ghali, the leader of the separatist Polisario Front, to a hospital in Logroño with the Spanish government's approval.



ANTONIO SEMPERE/AP

Thousands of young men crossed into the exclave of Ceuta after border security broke down

Juan Vivas, president of the autonomous government on Ceuta, called on Spain's prime minister, Pedro Sánchez, to declare a national emergency on grounds of national security.

In response, Madrid mobilised army units already in Ceuta to take to the streets and ensure security and order for local residents.

Unconfirmed reports suggested that Madrid and the Moroccan government were working on a joint operation to expel the migrants who have arrived this week. Spain's interior ministry insisted that it maintained "exemplary co-operation" with Morocco, particularly on migration issues.

Jupol, a Spanish police trade union, directly blamed Morocco for seizing "a window of opportunity as part of its hybrid warfare strategy, once again using migratory pressure on Ceuta as a tool for political blackmail".

Straw-licking stunt in very poor taste

Singapore

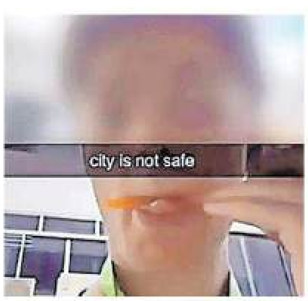
Jan Camenzind Broomby

A French teenager has been fined $600 Singaporean dollars (£348) after he admitted licking a straw and returning it to a vending machine.

Didier Gaspard Owen Maximilien, 19, filmed himself licking the straw and uploaded the video to social media with the caption "city is not safe" in March.

In April, he was charged with public nuisance by police after the video went viral and outraged Singaporeans. "He is truly sorry for having caused all this trouble, and he realises that what appeared to him at that time as something perhaps playful has turned out to be something very consequential," his lawyer, Kalidass Murugaiyan, said.

Prosecutors argued that, although Maximilien removed the straw before anyone else could use it, his actions undermined public trust in hygiene.



The teenager filmed himself putting the straw back in a vending machine

In Singapore individuals charged with public nuisance can face up to three months in prison. Prosecutors had pushed for a maximum fine of $2,000 Singaporean dollars.

Maximilien is enrolled in the Essec Business School in Singapore. Prosecutors say it will be up to the city-state's immigration department to decide whether he can keep his student pass.

The lick was met with anger by many on social media. "It made a lot of people's blood boil," Vernetta Lopez, a Singaporean actress and radio DJ, said in a video. "Why did you do this?"

"Make him clean all the straws from every IJOOZ machine," another resident said, referring to the company that operates the vending machines.

Singapore is known internationally for its strict laws and corporal punishment. The island retains the death penalty for offences including murder or severe drug trafficking. Up to 24 strokes of the cane can also be imposed as a punishment for male offenders under 50 years of age.

Cash galore! Bathers grab bags of notes tossed from speedboat

Italy

James Imam Milan

A scramble for cash broke out on a Sicilian beach after bags of banknotes were thrown from a speedboat that ran out of fuel yards from the coast.

Sunbathers rushed into the shallow waters of Casuzze, near the resort of Marina di Ragusa on the south of the island, in chaotic scenes described by local media as "like a film".

Balarm, a news website, said: "What was supposed to be a quiet day at the seaside turned into an unusual, surreal treasure hunt."

The total haul was thought to be about €700,000. A video circulated online showed beachgoers opening a blue Lidl cool bag that contained neatly arranged stacks of €20, €50 and €100 notes they had gathered.

Before the cash could be taken home, however, police arrived and confiscated it all. Officers are trying to work out where the money came from and whether its is linked to smuggling or the drugs trade.

Giuseppe Bascietto, who has written about the Sicilian mafia, said the area was taking on an "increasingly strategic role in the new international cocaine routes" as both a landing point and where drugs could be exchanged at sea.

Four people were in the speedboat when it stopped about 30ft from the coast. After two went to look for fuel, the coastguard approached, prompting the others to start throwing the money overboard. Three people were arrested.

Breivik inspires new wave of extremists

Fifteen years after the massacre, Norway fears the rise of copycats, writes **Alex Maxia** in Oslo

BEATE OMA DAHLE/NTB/AFP

Dignitaries lay flowers on the tenth anniversary of the massacre by Anders Behring Breivik, below, requesting parole in 2022

On a cool, drizzly Friday afternoon in July, almost 15 years ago to the day, Jens Stoltenberg was working on a speech in his prime ministerial residence when his thoughts were interrupted by a thunderous bang.

A mile away a car bomb had gone off next to the government block that housed his office, killing eight people and injuring ten.

"We were informed immediately of what happened as one of my advisers was on the phone to someone working inside the building. He described the magnitude of the damage as he walked down the stairs from my office on the 16th floor and said he had seen dead bodies on the ground floor," Stoltenberg told The Times.

Two hours later he began receiving notifications about another mass killing, on the lake island of Utoya, 20 miles to the northwest, where the Workers' Youth League (AUF) of his Labour Party was holding its summer camp.

That day a fraudster and failed financial speculator named Anders Behring Breivik murdered 77 people in the deadliest right-wing extremist massacre in Europe since 1980.

At the time, Breivik was shunned as a monster even by most of his fellow travellers in white supremacist circles, who were aghast that he had killed so many white children.

Now, however, the Norwegian PST intelligence service has said that he serves as an inspiration to young men willing to use violence against what they see as the creeping "Islamisation" of western societies and the liberal elites they hold responsible.

In a report published on the 15th anniversary of the killings, the agency noted a big increase in the number of teenagers and young adults in the West who had committed right-wing extremist attacks since 2021.

"Many of the minors who are being radicalised today cite Breivik as an important source of inspiration," it said. "They are so young that they have no personal memories of July 22 [the Utoya massacre]. The distance in time means that the youngest are less likely to grasp the reality of the acts of violence."

Stoltenberg, who was Nato secretary-general until 2024, and is now Norway's finance minister, said the developments made him uneasy, despite a broader consolidation of the democratic mainstream in his country over the past decade.

This weekend he will return to Utoya for debates with the next generation of politicians, a task he sees as vital to defusing the tensions that lead to polarisation and give succour to the extremes. "We see that there are far too many, also in Norway, who still believe in the extremists' hatred and those violent messages we saw on July 22," he said.

Oslo University's centre for research on extremism (C-Rex) has mapped the connections that link the country's hardline far-right scene to those in the UK and other countries.

Breivik was involved with the English Defence League, the white nationalist and anti-Islam movement that brought Tommy Robinson to prominence. "The links have existed ever since the English Defence League emerged, around 15 years ago," Anders Ravik Jupskas, the director of C-Rex, said. "There was an attempt to establish a similar organisation in Norway — the Norwegian Defence League — and the July 22 terrorist was also a member at some point."

He added: "Breivik was embedded in a larger network in what at the time was called 'counter jihad network', a very strongly anti-Muslim network that existed in many countries, particularly in the US and northern Europe."

The centre's analysis shows that the UK was second only to Germany in the number of incidents of right-wing extremist violence from 2010 to 2023.

In the past five years at least half a dozen convicted British right-wing extremists have cited Breivik's actions and writings as an influence. Mason Reynolds, a teenager from Brighton who was jailed in 2024 for planning a suicide bombing at a synagogue, had downloaded videos of the Utoya killings.

Breivik was also a source of inspiration for Brenton Tarrant, who killed 51 people at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2019 and for several violent extremists in his native Norway.

Caroline Iwarsson, a senior adviser at the Norwegian intelligence service, said it was often difficult to identify and track such "lone wolves" who had become radicalised by the legacy of Breivik and other figures in an increasingly international and online setting.

"The digital dimension is one [factor] as this has made extremist content readily available," she said. "The increased complexity in the ideological landscape is another. And the transnational aspect of the right-wing networks adds to the challenge of prevention."

Survivors of the Utoya massacre are haunted by grief and anxiety. One study suggested that half suffered from insomnia.

Lisa Marie Husby, who works in communications for a Norwegian co-operative, narrowly escaped death on the island. She was 19 at the time. "We could see the bullets hitting the trees around us and decided to run towards the cabin where the first aiders were based," she said.

Once at the cabin, Husby and her companions barricaded themselves in, sealing the door and the windows. "[Breivik] shot the door several times but in the end he decided to keep walking and did not manage to enter the cabin," she said.

Gaute Skjervo, who now leads the AUF, was 16 when it happened. He escaped by swimming across the lake, but Breivik killed his best friend. "It was very hard to survive that day, but it has been very hard also to survive the life after," he said. "We have been traumatised and over the past 15 years we have been regularly receiving death threats."

Stoltenberg will not let down his guard. "We have to fight against extremists every day," he said. "It's not something we can win once and for all: we need to repeat it again and again and again."

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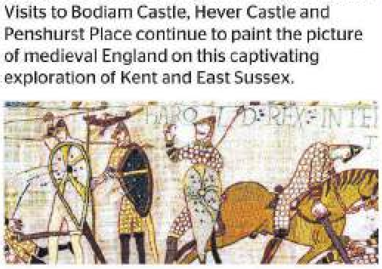
AGAINST OUR WHITE NATIONS!!
STOP YOUR
OUR WHITE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Pride attacker's father 'lives with man'

Germany

Elizabeth Rushton Berlin

The suspect in the Berlin Pride attack displayed violent traits from the age of six but his parents rejected attempts to intervene, reports say.

Abdul Ballout, 21, is believed to have driven a hired van into crowds near Brandenburg Gate on Saturday and then went on a stabbing spree, killing one woman and injuring 29 others. He was shot dead in a garden shed after a manhunt. Later the police found a video on his phone in which he swore allegiance to Isis.

Research by the newspaper Berliner Morgenpost, citing sources within Berlin law enforcement and youth welfare documentation, has now suggested a personal motive for targeting the Pride celebrations.

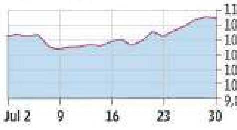
The paper claimed that Ballout's father, Tawfik, who separated from his mother several years ago, was gay and living with a man. His mother was a devout Muslim and Ballout was said to have sought refuge from tensions at home in radical mosques.

The paper also said Ballout had displayed violent and aggressive behaviour since the age of six. It added that Ballout's parents refused numerous attempts to intervene, from his first year in primary school until he left school in his mid-teens with no qualifications.

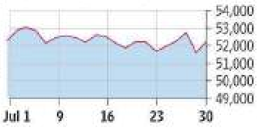
Ballout had been known to police as an Islamist extremist for years. He had been found guilty of planning violent acts by a juvenile court in May but was given a suspended sentence. He was subsequently placed under round-the-clock police surveillance, but the observation was relaxed two weeks later after he was deemed not to pose a high threat.

WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)

FTSE 100
10,897.27 (-11.14) ▼

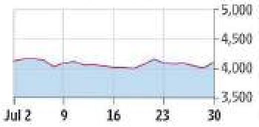


Dow Jones
52,208.06 (+613.92) ▲

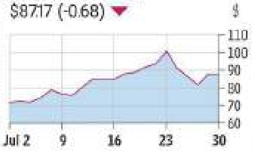


COMMODITIES

Gold
$4,112.67 (+90.76) ▲

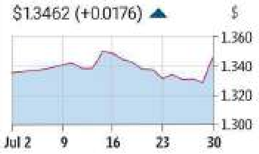


Brent crude (6pm)
$87.17 (-0.68) ▼

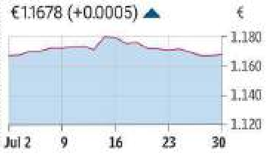


CURRENCIES

£/$
$1.3462 (+0.0176) ▲



£/€
€1.1678 (+0.0005) ▲



Government borrowing costs fall as Bank leaves rate steady

Mehreen Khan Economics Editor

UK government borrowing costs fell and traders cut back bets on interest rate rises this year after the Bank of England said there were no signs that rising oil prices were spilling into other parts of the economy.

Yields on two-year government bonds, known as gilts, fell by 0.13 percentage points to 4.33 per cent after the central bank kept the base rate on hold for the fifth time this year at 3.75 per cent. The Bank has made no change to interest rates since the outbreak of the US-Iran conflict in late February and last cut borrowing costs in December 2025.

Short-dated gilts are sensitive to the monetary policy outlook, suggesting that traders are cutting back expectations that the Bank will raise rates over the coming months. Yields fall when bond prices rally. Before the decision, traders had put a 50 per cent probability on the first interest rate rise of the year coming in September. This fell to below 40 per cent yesterday afternoon.

Expectations of a lower path for interest rates meant gilts were the best performing major bonds yesterday. Yields on 10-year gilts, a proxy for the government's debt costs, fell 0.06 percentage points to 4.99 per cent. The 10-year gilt yield hit a peak of 5.11 per cent last week when oil prices surged to more than $100 a barrel.

The pound strengthened by 0.1 per cent against the dollar to $1.34 and was stable against the euro at €1.17.

Policymakers have said they are ready to raise interest rates to 4 per cent if oil prices lead to a more generalised inflation where workers ask for inflation-busting pay increases and firms pass on their energy costs to customers. Andrew Bailey, governor of the Bank of England, said there was a "lack of evidence" over the second-round effects from the energy price shock but that it could "not yet be ruled out".

Oil prices will add 0.4 percentage points to inflation this year but broader weakness in the economy and jobs market meant "the disinflation process is in place", Bailey said. The Bank cited factors such as cheap Chinese exports after the imposition of US tariffs last year as helping to bring down prices.

Annual consumer price inflation is running at 2.6 per cent, below the 3 per cent forecast by the Bank in April. Consumer prices are expected to peak at 3.2 per cent this year, compared with an earlier forecast of close to 4 per cent.

Pantheon analysts said interest rates were likely to stay unchanged until the end of 2027, when the Bank expects to hit its 2 per cent inflation target.

Bailey gives PM some comfort, page 36

Apple beats estimates on iPhone sales

Tim Cook bows out with best Q3 for handsets

Louisa Clarence-Smith
US Business Editor

Apple beat quarterly sales and profit estimates after reporting strong demand for the iPhone in Tim Cook's last earnings report as chief executive.

The world's most valuable publicly traded company said sales for the quarter ended June 27 were up 16.4 per cent to $109.4 billion, compared with analyst estimates of $108.65 billion.

● **Amazon beat market forecasts for quarterly cloud revenue growth on the back of surging enterprise AI spending, signalling the company's investments are paying off. Revenue at its cloud computing unit, Amazon Web Services, rose 37 per cent to $42.2 billion in the second quarter to the end of June, compared with estimates of a 31.2 per cent increase. Group revenue was $200.61 billion against forecasts of $196.47 billion. The shares were up 8.7 per cent at $256.83 in after-hours trading.**

Profit rose 27 per cent year-on-year to $29.8 billion, beating Wall Street's forecast of $27.8 billion. The shares, however, fell $12.54, or 3.8 per cent, to $320.71 in after-hours trading.

Sales were boosted by a 21.7 per cent increase in iPhone revenues to $54.3 billion, above analyst estimates of $53.9 billion. Those iPhone sales were Apple's best ever for a third quarter, when phone sales typically begin to slow as customers anticipate new models in the autumn.

However, this year Apple customers are racing to snap up iPhones after a global crunch in memory chip supplies prompted the company to raise prices of Macs and iPads. Some Wall Street analysts expect that Apple will increase iPhone prices around the time of its annual launch event in September.

Cook is due to stand down in September and will be replaced by John Ternus, who has worked in Apple's hardware division since 2013.

Apple has taken a different approach from rivals in how it builds AI features, focusing on practical uses integrated into its products, while competitors focus on fully autonomous "agents".

At Apple's annual developers conference in June, Apple introduced "Siri AI", a more conversational assistant with a standalone app and the ability to analyse what is on a user's screen and pull in information from the web.

Apple said last night that sales of Macs were up 28.7 per cent to $10.4 billion, beating analyst estimates of $8.7 billion. Sales of iPads were down 5.9 per cent to $6.2 billion, below analyst expectations of $6.92 billion.

Cook attributed the iPad decline to a "tough compare" with the same quarter a year ago when Apple introduced the budget-minded A16 iPad.

Revenue at Apple's services business, which includes the App Store and iCloud, was up 12.1 per cent to $30.7 billion, missing estimates of $31.2 billion.

JACK PIERSON FOR CANADA GOOSE

High-flyer Canada Goose beat its first-quarter revenue forecasts, helped by demand for its lightweight jackets and T-shirts, but warned that the newly announced US tariffs on Canadian imports could affect earnings in the future

Apprentices too complex to hire, says Screwfix boss

Isabella Fish Retail Editor

Bureaucracy and rising employment costs are discouraging businesses from hiring young workers through apprenticeships, the boss of Screwfix warned.

In a letter to The Times today John Mewett, chief executive of the trade retailer, said many employers, including sole traders, wanted to train the next generation but were walking away from apprenticeship schemes because the process had become "too complex".

"They want to take on apprentices, but they tell us that each stage of the process is too complicated, from the paperwork, to hiring, to managing apprentice workload," Mewett wrote. "Too often, this puts them off."

In the UK, trade employers can access up to £8,000 in support through multiple apprenticeship schemes, but Mewett said the complexity meant that many simply did not claim it.

Trade apprenticeships are typically created by the employer and training provider, while funding and the legal frameworks are from the government.

Andy Burnham this week pledged to boost vocational education, saying the UK must "value the hard hat as much as the graduation cap".

The warning comes as Britain faces a growing shortage of tradespeople. With just 24 per cent of workers in the trades aged 44 or less, according to Screwfix, employers say bringing in new entrants has become difficult.

"Funding should be seamless and incentivise taking on young people, not throwing up barriers," Mewett said.

According to Screwfix's survey of 700 trade professionals, 48 per cent of employers who hired an apprentice last year received no funding because navigating the system was too difficult.

The government was contacted for comment.

Letters, page 26

Need to know

1 UK government borrowing costs fell and traders cut back bets on interest rate rises this year after the Bank of England said there were no signs that rising oil prices were spilling into other parts of the economy. Yields on two-year gilts fell by 0.13 percentage points to 4.33 per cent after the Bank kept the base rate on hold. **Page 33**

2 In a letter to The Times, John Mewett, chief executive of the retailer Screwfix, said many employers wanted to train the next generation but were walking away from apprenticeship schemes because the process had become "too complex". **Pages 26, 33**

3 Lloyds Banking Group has been criticised by unions for planning to scale up its technology centre in India with a second site in Hyderabad, where it already employs more than 5,000 workers. It came as the bank unveiled plans to invest more than £13 billion in a new strategy over the next four years.

4 The Bank of England has kept its powder dry, choosing to keep interest rates unchanged at the start of a new government. The Bank's latest outlook cut its inflation projections and said the annual rate would come close to its 2 per cent target by the end of next year. **Page 36**

5 Wildfires sweeping Europe are "very worrying", Wael Sawan, the boss of Shell, has said, as the oil and gas major cashed in on prices to make profits of almost $10 billion. **Page 38**

6 Jonathan Reeves, a senior Goldman Sachs executive, has been awarded nearly £1.5 million after being sacked for failing to respond quickly to a work email while on paternity leave from his job. **Page 40**

7 Adidas shares fell after second-quarter profits missed expectations, dragged down by spending on marketing for the World Cup. Adidas sponsored 14 national teams in the tournament, including the finalists Argentina and Spain. Operating profit in the April to June quarter rose by 5 per cent to €574 million. Adidas shares fell by 11.5 per cent. **Page 41**

> TV broadcasters old and new need to re-find the magic of the Fox Dome Theatre in California

Harry Wallop, page 37

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Lloyds expansion draws

Helen Cahill Financial Correspondent

Lloyds Banking Group has been criticised by trade unions for planning to scale up its technology centre in India after it unveiled plans to invest more than £13 billion into a new strategy over the next four years.

The FTSE 100 bank said its plans would make "money simpler, safer and more connected" for its 28 million customers and would involve the development of a "smart wallet" using the technology it acquired through the takeover of Curve, a mobile app that provides a digital wallet for multiple debit and credit cards.

However, Lloyds drew criticism from the Affinity union, which said the bank's investment in tech included new highly-skilled jobs in India that could be in the UK. Lloyds has purchased a second site in Hyderabad, where it already employs 5,000 workers.

Mark Brown, general secretary of Affinity, said the decision amounted to a "massive loss of well-paid jobs to the UK economy". He added: "The new prime minister can't hope to grow the economy if Lloyds, which makes 96 per cent of its profits in the UK, is allowed to offshore key knowledge-based jobs."

Lloyds is advertising for more than 100 jobs in Hyderabad, primarily in software engineering. The bank has not confirmed the geographical split for its investment plan. However, a source close to Lloyds said the current vacancies were roles previously contracted out to local suppliers and that no existing UK jobs were being moved to India.

The bank is also understood to have 1,000 vacancies in tech and data in the UK and plans to grow this workforce over the next few years. Lloyds is thought to currently employ fewer people in tech and IT in India than some UK rivals.

Lloyds revealed its new strategy alongside its half-year results, which showed statutory profit before tax up 23 per cent to £4.3 billion, ahead of expectations.

The bank's net interest income — the difference between what the bank charged borrowers and what it paid savers — rose by 9 per cent to £7.3 billion, helping lift total net income by 9 per cent to £9.7 billion. It attributed its improved profits to higher overall revenues and cost-cutting, and pared back its allowance for expected loan losses slightly to £3.3 billion.

On the back of its performance Lloyds, which is the biggest lender to consumers in the UK, said it would increase its interim dividend by 30 per cent to 1.58p per share and start a £1 billion share buyback programme.

Charlie Nunn, chief executive, said: "In the first half of 2026, we delivered sustained strength in financial performance, with continued income growth, improving operating leverage, strong credit performance, growing capital generation and increasing shareholder returns."

He said the bank saw "clear benefits" from agentic AI and would use the technology to provide advice and guidance for customers on products.

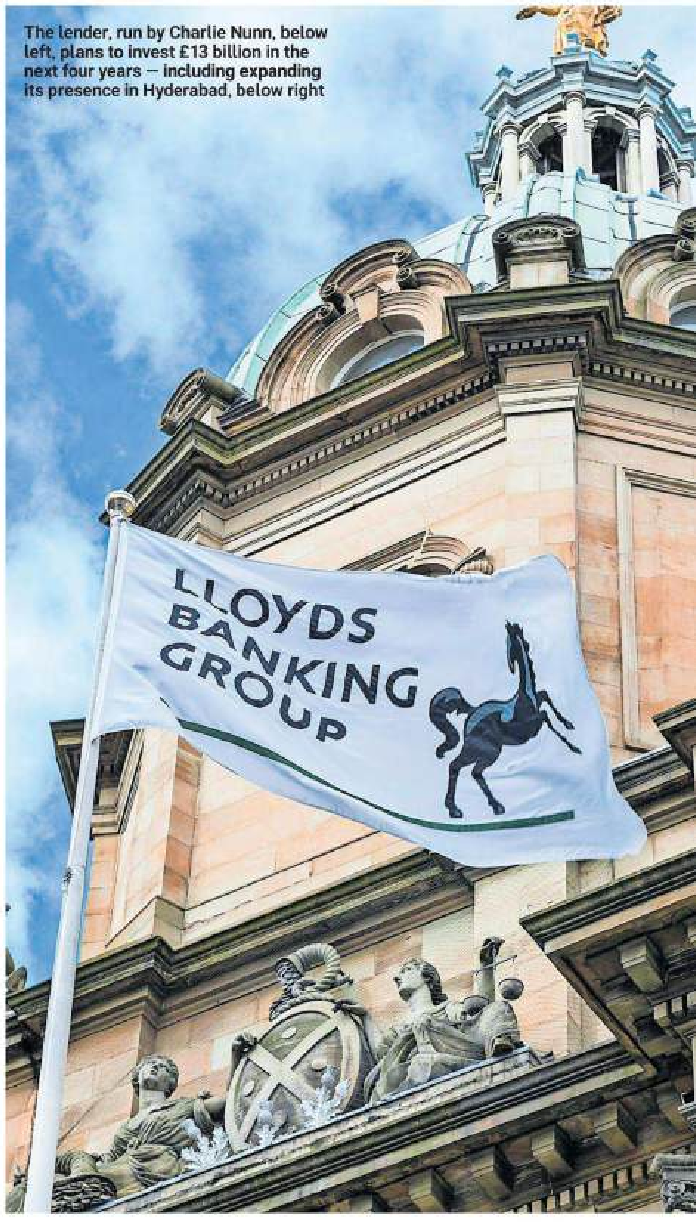
The bank said it would deliver gross cost savings of about £2 billion by deploying technology to automate processes and improve the productivity of its workforce.

Lloyds bought Curve in November last year for £120 million in a deal the bank said would give customers "expanded payment flexibility". The app allows customers to switch payments to different cards after making a purchase to save on any credit fees incurred accidentally, and has rule-setting capabilities helping ensure certain types of transactions are only issued through certain channels.

The bank said it would also develop an in-app transport platform to create a market for vehicle finance, leasing, insurance, energy, mobility and servicing products.

Meanwhile, it pledged to double the size of its relationship team arranging loans for small businesses and promised to deliver new loans of more than £45 billion.

The bank was set to double the size of its portfolio of rental homes to 20,000 and said it would cut the time it took for customers to complete a home purchase "from weeks to days".



The lender, run by Charlie Nunn, below left, plans to invest £13 billion in the next four years — including expanding its presence in Hyderabad, below right

Rayner rejects plan for 3,500 homes

James Hurley Assistant Business Editor

The government rejected contentious plans for 3,500 homes, office and retail space and a football stadium in Kent after concluding that the downsides to the proposals "significantly and demonstrably" outweighed the benefits.

Angela Rayner, the new housing secretary, has refused planning permission for the Northfleet Harbourside plans, which also included a 300-bed hotel and promised regeneration of a brownfield area.

The reasons the proposals were rejected included proximity to Britannia Refined Metals, one of Europe's largest lead refineries, as "future residents located within the residential blocks would likely be exposed to adverse levels of lead".

The government concluded that this would lead to "significant health risks — especially for children, pregnant women and the elderly". The decision comes despite the UK's severe need for new housing and the government's target of delivering 1.5 million new homes in England by 2029.

Northfleet Harbourside, which was to be located on the south side of the Thames, has been the subject of fierce debate among local businesses and residents since the plans were initially approved in May 2024.

A public inquiry took place last year after Northfleet Harbourside was "called in" by the government in February 2025, the term for the relatively rare practice of ministers deciding the outcome of an application rather than the local planning authority.

The Port of London Authority, local small businesses and Britannia Refined Metals led objections to the plans, with concerns including the loss of vital industrial space for small and medium-sized companies.

Other reasons for the refusal included the "devastating" impact on Robins Wharf, which handles aggregates used in the construction supply chain. The government said the wharf "is of local and regional importance in order to support the economic growth of the southeast of England".

The government also took into the account the loss of about 650 jobs. The viability of the proposals were also questioned. The decision was made by Matthew Pennycook, housing minister, on behalf of Rayner.

In the background to the saga there has been a mystery owner behind the project, with its developers refusing to reveal the details of their main shareholder.

The plans had disputed links to a Kuwaiti businessman, Abdulla Al-Humaidi, who was bankrupted in the fallout from the failure of his £3.5 billion plans for a nearby theme park, nicknamed the Dartford Disneyland.

Supporters of the plans included fans of Ebbsfleet United Football Club, which Al-Humaidi used to own. It was in line for a new stadium if the project had been approved.

Northfleet Central 1, which lodged the plans, has been approached for comment.

Hedge fund sells holdings after AI stocks crash

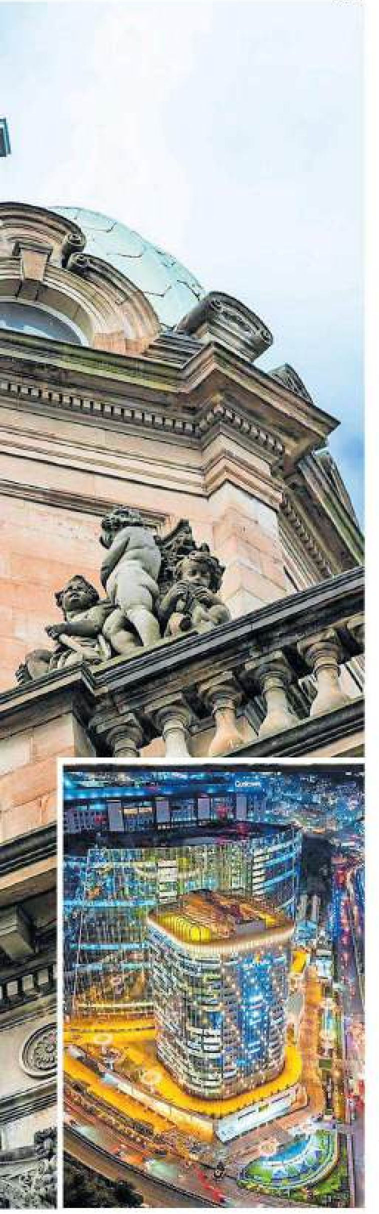
Louisa Clarence-Smith
US Business Editor

A hedge fund run by a 25-year-old hailed as an artificial intelligence wunderkind has reportedly been forced to sell all of its public stock holdings after suffering big losses.

Leopold Aschenbrenner's Situational Awareness is to sell most of its stock investments to Ken Griffin's Citadel, The Wall Street Journal reported.

The AI-focused fund is said to have been seeking funding to raise capital after steep losses on its portfolio. It has faced losses on software stocks and AI-related holdings including SK Hynix, the South Korean semiconductor com-

flak from unions


ALAMY

pany, down 12 per cent in the past month. Other holdings including Adobe, Nebius, Micron Technology, SanDisk and CoreWeave have all fallen more than 20 per cent in the past month.

Situational Awareness, based in San Francisco, reported a 439 per cent net return from the start of the year to June 30 after leveraged exposure amplified the rally across AI-linked equities, according to the Financial Times. It recently reported about $20 billion in assets under management.

The fund has is said to have hired Bank of America, Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan Chase to reduce positions and meet margin requirements. Situational is understood to still hold its private company investments, which include bets on the AI giant Anthropic.

Aschenbrenner, a German native, joined OpenAI in 2023 to work on the "superalignment" team, which involved coming up with solutions to ensure future AI systems smarter than humans follow human intent. He was fired in April 2024 over an alleged leak.

He founded Situational Awareness that year with a hypothesis that AI models could become capable of doing the work of AI researchers by 2027.

Bank places its bets, from smart wallets to house sales

Lloyds has revealed a range of new measures in a wide-ranging strategy that largely focuses on improving its digital services and cutting costs over the next four years (Helen Cahill writes).

The bank said it would be underpinned by new investment of £13 billion spread across initiatives including a new smart wallet, a wider range of wealth products, and a car finance platform, with the new funding to be deployed by 2030.

FINANCIAL TARGETS

Lloyds has refreshed its financial targets as part of the update, promising shareholders it will deliver a return on tangible equity, the banking sector's measure of returns, of 20 per cent by 2030, up from 16 per cent currently. Meanwhile, the lender will seek to bring its cost-to-income ratio, a measure of operational efficiency, to less than 45 per cent.

The group will also press ahead with cost savings of £2 billion by using AI for processes such as complaints handling and fraud detection. Lloyds has already delivered cost cuts of £2 billion over the past four years through digitising processes and closing bank branches.

PUSH FOR INSURANCE

Nunn said he did not want to put a precise target on how many products he would want to sell to each customer, but the group will use its customer data to try to sell more insurance policies, known in the industry as a "bancassurance" business model. The company also bought Schroders Wealth last year and has set a target of signing up one million wealth customers by 2030.

He said: "What we typically see in the UK is about 2.5 products per customer that has a main bank current account with us.

"That growth in secondary and product-specific accounts we expect will continue. When we deliver really joined-up experiences, with really good pricing, and increasingly with rewards, we do see people choosing to bring more of their wallet to us and that's absolutely part of the strategy."

Separately, Lloyds unveiled plans to offer a "smart wallet" that will let customers make flexible payments, take out point-of-sale loans and store key documents, which will all be provided using technology the group acquired with its purchase of Curve, a British fintech.

CAR FINANCE

Lloyds has said it is creating the UK's first "integrated transport ecosystem" by creating a marketplace for car finance products, which will include finance, leasing and insurance products for customers. The group already has a 17 per cent market share in vehicle financing and leasing, but says it has spotted more opportunities in a market with an annual spend of £35 billion. Lloyds has already launched its vehicle management capabilities in its app and will be adding more products targeting consumers, businesses and brokers.

CORPORATE LOANS

Meanwhile, it has pledged to double the size of its relationship team servicing small businesses and has promised to deliver new loans of more than £45 billion. Relationship managers will also be given new AI tools to help them sign off lending for customers and the bank will also significantly increase the number of lending decisions that are made automatically. The wider corporate and investment bank will be expanded across the US and Europe to "broaden and deepen client relationships".

PROPERTY PLANS

The bank is set to double the size of its portfolio of rental homes to 20,000 under its Lloyds Living initiative, which was launched in 2021. Lloyds will also seek to generate more income from the portfolio by cross-selling insurance and shared ownership mortgages to customers.

Meanwhile, for homebuyers, Lloyds is promising to use AI to reduce the time it takes to complete a property transaction "from weeks to days", having already cut the average time it takes to process a remortgaging application by 70 per cent.

Fantasy sports buy-up is big American bet for IG

Jessica Newman

IG Group, the financial markets betting company, has made its first foray into the prediction markets industry, agreeing a $1.3 billion deal to buy Underdog.

The New York-based Underdog, launched in 2020, operates prediction markets and a fantasy sports platform, where users can pick a virtual team and win cash based on results and statistics.

IG said the acquisition included an upfront consideration based on an enterprise value of about $1.1 billion and an earn-out of about $200 million for Underdog shareholders.

The company added that it would pause share buybacks, which it hopes to resume next year.

Underdog, which said its fantasy sports business had 11 million-plus registered accounts, was launched in 2020 and moved into prediction markets last September. This has become one of the industry's hottest sectors as start-up platforms such as Polymarket and Kalshi, founded by entrepreneurs in their twenties, attract millions of users and billions of dollars in trading volume.

While betting on the outcome of events such as a political election has long been permissible in the UK via bookmakers, prediction markets in the US have gained hugely in popularity in the past two years after a US court allowed Kalshi to list bets on the 2024 presidential election.

For IG, Britain's oldest spread-betting company, buying Underdog marks a "decisive step" in the company's long-term strategy "to build a global consumer engagement platform".

The company estimates it will double its American revenues and increase US monthly active customers tenfold through the acquisition, as well as establishing itself as a leader in the prediction markets industry.

What the blazes is Shell up to?

BUSINESS COMMENTARY *Alistair Osborne*

No prizes for guessing what a lot of people will think of this: the boss of Shell saying how "very worrying" it is that wildfires are ripping across Europe.

As Wael Sawan put it: "It's devastating. Every time I see the images on TV, my heart goes out to the many who are suffering from it." He sounded sincere, too. But a facile riposte is child's play — aren't you running one of the planet's biggest fossil fuel groups, making profits out of the stuff that scientists think is the main cause of climate change? Vast profits, too: $9.84 billion of Iran war-fuelled earnings, its second-highest quarterly haul ever (report, pages 38-39).

Indeed, the company's figures were greeted with this little missive from environmental campaigners Uplift: "Oil giant Shell posts rising war profits as the UK and Europe burns." It's emotive but not factually wrong — Shell is coining it from high oil and gas prices, while forests burn around Bordeaux and Madrid; a Suffolk blaze puts the Sizewell B nuclear plant on high alert; England is on track for record heat-related deaths this summer, topping 2022's 2,985; and supermarket chiefs warn that extreme weather poses a risk to food supply. The Shell boss is far too smart not to notice this awkward juxtaposition.

Hence a question for Sawan: how long before Shell needs to recognise what's going on here in a far more strategically overt way? Yes, this is tricky territory. Under predecessor Ben van Beurden, Shell made a costly lurch greenwards in 2021 that Sawan, who took charge in January 2023, has spent three years fixing.

Successfully, too — even if he was lucky Shell's green pivot wasn't as inept as BP's. Sawan has refocused the company unashamedly on oil and gas, cut $5.8 billion of structural costs and delivered real operational and financial resilience: enough to keep at least $3 billion of share buybacks flowing for 19 quarters on the trot, whatever the vicissitudes of geopolitics or oil and gas prices.

Few debates are as nuanced, either, as the energy transition: a point rather lost on Uplift, which is idiotically calling for Andy Burnham to "stop the Rosebank oil field": one of two in the North Sea awaiting the go-ahead, alongside the Jackdaw gas field, in which Shell has interests. Sawan is right that, when the UK's energy system is still "roughly 75 per cent dependent on fossil-based energy", it is far more environmentally friendly to use the "indigenous" stuff we've got than import it from around the world — not least when it also boosts jobs, tax receipts and energy security.

He also insists Shell is "not just a fossil fuel company". As he points out, it's "investing in the largest green hydrogen facility in Europe", a 200-megawatt plant in Rotterdam; it's the "second-largest EV charging player after Tesla"; and, in total, it's put "$20 billion" into renewable projects that it's "now trying to deliver a return on".

Shell has also long called for governments globally to implement a clear tax on carbon emissions, so sending "price signals" to customers to shift to "more expensive" green "solutions". Yet little of this just now is in the investment case for Shell.

Of course, Sawan alone cannot speed up the energy transition. But given he's on the front line of it, doesn't he have a responsibility to do more to wean his customers, and Shell, off fossil fuels? Sympathy for wildfire victims isn't enough.

The Rolls paradox

Here's a puzzler from Rolls-Royce boss Tufan Erginbilgic: would you sell your shares in the soaraway engine-maker he's transformed so brilliantly if you got a mere £8 billion share buyback over three years instead of the promised £9 billion?

Listen to him and there's a risk you would, what with it hurting Rolls's position against "competitors in financial markets". Which is why he now finds himself in this ludicrous position: arguing that Rolls needs a taxpayer handout of around £1 billion to help develop a new engine for short-haul aircraft, while simultaneously handing nine times that back to investors in buybacks alone — excluding the dividends on top (report, page 39).

And all at a company sitting on £2.1 billion net cash that, after market-beating half year results, has raised full-year profits and free cashflow guidance to as much as £4.9 billion and £4 billion. To boot, one that's now valued at £122 billion on shares up 6 per cent to £14.63.

Who knows, maybe there are better candidates for taxpayer freebies. Yes, as Erginbilgic points out, the rest of the world is at it: the likes of America's GE and Pratt & Whitney, and France's Safran, get "three or four times" as much in subsidies. If he succeeds with his new engine, it will create "40,000 jobs", with Rolls paying "a lot more tax" in one and a half years from it than "everything I am asking for".

It would also provide a growth path for Rolls in by far the biggest part of the aviation market. Not that Erginbilgic believes he needs the new engine for his time at Rolls: "I don't need more legacy."

His arguments are clear. But so, too, is something else: Rolls doesn't need the money. It's corporate welfarism gone mad.

Bring on the sub

First, a boycott of the World Cup by all 55 European member countries of Uefa. Next maybe? A football boycott of JP Morgan, the bank that's backed Fifa's Gianni Infantino and his mates from Donald Trump's family in trying to turn football's greatest competition into a commercial sleaze-fest.

Despite its European Super League antics, JP Morgan had a lucrative football practice: financing Everton's new stadium and the Bernabeu overhaul for Real Madrid, as well as advising Sir Jim Ratcliffe on his Man Utd deal. After the Fifa uproar, won't football clubs prefer to have a different bank on the pitch?

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Bailey gives some comfort to the new government

TOLGA AKMEN/EPA

England
Eng
Bank

The rise in bond yields allowed the Bank to keep the base rate unchanged at 3.75 per cent, Andrew Bailey, the governor, said

Mehreen Khan Economics Editor

The Bank of England has kept its powder dry, choosing to keep interest rates unchanged at the start of a new government.

Andy Burnham, the prime minister, and his chancellor John Healey can take comfort from the Bank's latest outlook, which cut its inflation projections and said the annual rate would come close to its 2 per cent target by the end of next year.

Annual consumer price inflation is due to peak at 3.2 per cent in the autumn, just above the 3.1 per cent reached in March. Current inflation is running at 2.6 per cent, significantly below the 3 per cent the central bank expected in the spring.

The Bank also agrees with Labour's assessment that the VAT cut on energy bills will reduce household bills by about £45 from October, resulting in annual inflation falling by 0.1 per cent.

Despite the recent jump in oil prices, the nine-strong monetary policy committee (MPC) is in a more comfortable position than its peers in the US. Andrew Bailey, governor of the Bank, has said the climb in government bond yields since March has raised mortgage rates and tightened financial conditions, allowing the Bank to leave the base rate at 3.75 per cent this year.

Kevin Warsh, chairman of the Federal Reserve, said the same on Wednesday — but bond investors do not believe Trump's Fed chairman is brave enough to respond to another step-up in inflation.

In his second press conference in the job, Warsh told markets he will not "spoon feed" them with running commentary about how interest rates will react to new data on inflation, given the gyrations in the oil prices.

That is all well and good. Bailey and Christine Lagarde, head of the European Central Bank, have also put less weight on their forecasts and "forward guidance" in an era where it is even more foolish to think you know what the future holds.

But Warsh's attempt to revolutionise the last 20 years of central banking convention has got him into trouble. Bondholders took his attempts at being gnomic about monetary policy as a cover for the fact that he is not willing to raise interest rates and upset the president.

Yields on 30-year US government bonds spiked to their highest level since the financial crisis after his press conference. This was the asset class that Liz Truss's mini-budget set on fire. It is the part of the bond market that can bring down governments — and central bankers.

The new Fed chair wants to talk less and let traders do the job of pricing where they think interest rates should be given the state of the economy. The bond market can probably accept a world with fewer central bank speeches and press conferences. But when Warsh does speak, he does so in riddles. He started his press conference denying that there was a tacit acceptance of higher inflation, but then refused to say that the rise in current inflation will require an interest rate rise.

When asked what kind of alternative inflation measures the Fed was looking at, Warsh refused to answer. Eric Rosengren, a former president of the Boston Fed, warned that Warsh's "unresponsiveness over time not only increases undesirable uncertainty, but also could be misinterpreted as a loss of Fed independence".

Warsh is in a trickier position than Bailey because the world's largest economy is more vulnerable to a sustained inflationary shock where oil prices do spill over into higher wages. Massive spending on artificial intelligence is also a bigger inflationary pressure in the US than in the rest of the world.

Like the Fed, three members of the Bank's committee voted for an interest rate rise this month, up from two in June. The newest hawk, Catherine Mann, added her voice to the dissenting camp after the breakdown of the US-Iran ceasefire this month, which temporarily pushed oil prices up to $100 a barrel last week. An interest rate rise now would help "reinforce policy credibility," Mann said.

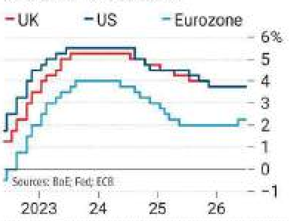
The Bank is not yet facing the same scrutiny from the bond vigilantes. Traders are still betting on about two interest rate rises to come this year — a position they have held since the outbreak of the US-Iran war. The Bank has yet to deliver on a monetary tightening, but it can point to weaker inflation and a soft labour market as good reasons to wait and see. In contrast to the 2022 energy price shock, the Bank is yet to see evidence of "second-round effects" from oil price inflation moving into higher wage settlements or the prices charged to consumers and businesses.

Bailey's credibility is not yet under the microscope, compared to Warsh's rocky new regime at the Fed. But the UK is not out of the woods yet. A roughly $10 rise in global oil prices adds around 0.2 percentage points to interest rate forecasts.

The UK is a major energy and food importer and could be in the crosshairs of a gas price shock this winter. European gas futures prices have hit three-year highs this month, reflecting dwindling gas stocks ahead of the winter months.

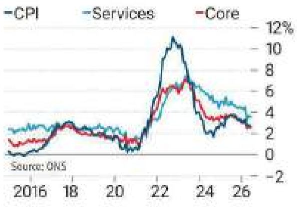
Oil prices are responsible for adding 0.4 percentage points to inflation this year. A natural gas squeeze could force inflation and bills higher under the Ofgem price cap. "The risks to energy prices lie to the upside," Bailey said.

Global interest rates



Sources: BoE; Fed; ECB

UK inflation



Source: ONS

Regulator censures 'loan notes' firm

James Hurley Assistant Business Editor

A business that worked with promoters who mis-sold "loan notes" by not disclosing "very high" levels of commission taken from investors' money has been censured by the City regulator.

Equity for Growth (Securities) approved financial promotions for third-party firms that were "unfair, unclear and misleading", the regulator said.

The Financial Conduct Authority said it would have fined Equity for Growth over the mis-selling if it were not for the fact it had already shut it down.

The intervention relates to the authority's growing concern about a spate of "mini-bond" or loan note investment schemes which are sold on the promise of generous and "secure" returns but are high risk and in some cases allegedly fraudulent.

Equity for Growth was placed into liquidation in March because it cannot afford to pay the level of compensation ordered by the Financial Ombudsman Service in relation to firms whose promotions it approved under the so-called "appointed representative" regime. Equity for Growth was responsible for ensuring its "appointed representatives" were "fit and proper" and complied with City rules.

Its appointed representatives included Hunter Jones, which promoted schemes including Dolphin, a German property scheme that collapsed in 2020 owing about 25,000 investors around the world close to £1 billion.

Dolphin's founder, Charles Smethurst, was convicted of fraud in Germany last year. Thousands of British and Irish investors lost millions of pounds.

Hunter Jones's promotion of another loan note scheme, Magna Group, was also a factor. Magna was shut down in 2021 over its "misleading" investments. Directors of Magna continued to take investors' money "even after the companies were insolvent", the government's Insolvency Service found.

Hunter Jones "frequently breached regulatory obligations", according to the judgment. Hunter Jones remains active though unregulated. It declined to comment. It has previously said it has "learnt lessons".

The authority said Equity for Growth approved promotions "which failed to disclose very high commission fees".

The deductions can make it difficult for the underlying investment to perform well enough to be viable.

US growth slows to 1.5% despite higher spending

Louisa Clarence-Smith
US Business Editor

US economic growth slowed in the second quarter despite higher consumer spending and strong investment.

Gross domestic product increased at an annualised rate of 1.5 per cent in the April-June quarter, according to an advance estimate published by the commerce department's Bureau of Economic Analysis. The economy grew by 2.1 per cent in the first quarter.

Consumer spending, which accounts for more than two thirds of US economic activity, rose by 3.2 per cent after abruptly slowing to 0.5 per cent growth in the January-March quarter. Spending has remained resilient despite higher costs stemming from the Middle East conflict, with consumers supported by bigger tax refunds this year.

Higher-income households are also benefiting from strong growth in asset prices, including US stocks. Analysts said that the Fifa World Cup tournament helped to spur spending.

Business investment boomed amid a race to invest in artificial intelligence. However, economists have warned that the US-led war with Iran, now in its sixth month, poses a downside risk to demand and economic growth in the second half of the year. Average petrol prices are back above $4 a gallon.

The Federal Reserve maintained its benchmark borrowing costs in a range of 3.5 per cent to 3.75 per cent.

Harry Wallop

Disney's Mickey Mouse Club hopes to save our children from AI slop

This month the streaming platform Disney+ announced it was rebooting *The Mickey Mouse Club*, the children's television show that in the 1980s and 1990s launched the career of an astonishing number of actors and singers including Ryan Gosling, Justin Timberlake, Christina Aguilera and Britney Spears.

I am too old to have witnessed much of this incarnation and the bits I did glimpse were saccharine compared with the more anarchic British kids' shows I had grown up with, such as *Tiswas*, *Swap Shop* or *Why Don't You?*.

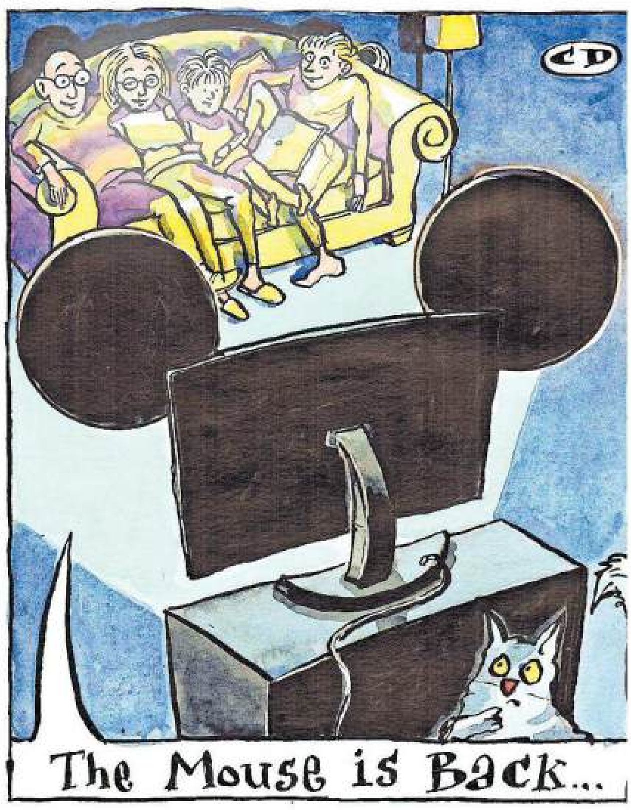
But I am always cheered that anyone is prepared to invest money in original children's television programming. This week's publication of Ofcom's annual report highlights the dire state of kids' viewing habits.

Children aged 4 to 15 watch every day on average 178 minutes of video, be it live television, catch-up TV or video streaming. That's a fraction under three hours, which sounds a lot but it is, in fact, far, far less than their grandparents — those aged 65 and over watch six and half hours every day. But unlike older adults, who turn to BBC One as their first option, under 16s turn to YouTube, by far.

Of course, there is plenty of decent stuff on YouTube, but it also hold — I know from having investigated this — a lot of disturbing and low-quality artificial intelligence-made slop specifically aimed at children.

Will *The Mickey Mouse Club* be able to lure kids away from brain-rotting content on YouTube? I am doubtful. But the reboot is important for a more interesting reason: the club is a central part of Disney's history, arguably a key reason that Disney has become a $171 billion entertainment behemoth. And it might offer a lesson for television channels, linear and subscription, to win back viewers from YouTube and TikTok.

Let me explain. The Mickey Mouse Club started as an actual club way back in 1929, before Walt Disney had even made a feature film. He had just released *Steamboat Willie*, the first cartoon with synchronised sound, and children had started going to the cinema for the cartoons before films, rather than the movie itself.



The manager of Fox Dome Theatre, California, contacted Walt to say that 1,000 children turned up every weekend just to watch Mickey Mouse cartoons — why not start a club? He even suggested charging a small fee, which parents would pay because it got their offspring out of the house. Walt agreed and, crucially, suggested that if it were a success they should franchise the club. Within just two years it had more than a million members, outnumbering those who had joined the Boy and Girl Scouts of America combined.

I discovered this while listening to the Disney episode of *Acquired*, the fascinating business history podcast. Hosted by two former venture capitalists, it breaks all the podcasting rules, releasing an episode once a month, if that, each a self-indulgent four hours long and frequently containing lots of jargon. But, as with its episodes on Rolex, Coca-Cola and Microsoft, the history of Disney is full of engrossing details, not least that Walt blagged his way into Universal Studios with a fake business card, aged 21, to spend a day secretly watching how they made films.

I also had not realised that the original Disneyland was funded by an ingenious deal struck with ABC Television: the broadcaster invested $500,000 as well as guaranteeing $4.5 million in bank loans.

In return, Walt agreed, reluctantly at first, to produce some TV shows. One of these was *Davy Crockett*, which would rapidly become the second most popular programme in America, with its theme music reaching the top of the charts. In 1955 Disney sold 10 million *Davy Crockett* caps with racoon tails. In total Disney would go on to sell $300 million worth of merchandise — much more than it was making from its films.

This model of profiting from spin-offs rather than the content itself (to use the modern term) dates back to the original club of 1929. First, the cinemas themselves paid $25 (about $500 in today's money) to be a franchisee. Then the parents paid a far smaller amount for the right to buy hats, buttons, banners and the like for their children.

It was a genius business model that worked because Disney built a community around this exciting technology of talking cartoons. It involved the children reciting a credo — "I will be a good American!" — secret handshakes and elected officials.

The streamers, including Disney, now have a model of charging viewers a modest amount for content and then trying to persuade us to upgrade to a premium version. But what do we get with that? No ads. That's it. And, looking at the Ofcom data, it's clear that we have passed peak steaming. In 2021 some 60 per cent of British households had a Netflix subscription. It has since edged up to 61 per cent. Amazon Prime has fallen from 47 per cent to 46 per cent; Disney+ hit 26 per cent a couple of years ago and has not climbed any further.

The streamers are increasingly behaving like traditional, linear broadcasters, showing live sport, releasing shows on a weekly basis and broadcasting vodcasts that look remarkably like 1970s chat shows.

TV broadcasters old and new need to re-find the magic of the Fox Dome Theatre in California. Not with the reciting of a credo or with secret handshakes, but with fostering the sense of community that TV, at its very best, can do with landmark documentaries, big sporting moments or shows such as *Celebrity Traitors*. If you want to compete with YouTube's relentless, algorithm-driven short-form videos, viewers need to feel part of something bigger than just sitting in front of a screen.

Harry Wallop is a consumer journalist and broadcaster. Follow him on X @hwallop

Conveyancing proves three times quicker in Scotland

David Byers Deputy Property Editor

House sales take three times longer to complete in some areas of England than in Scotland, and pressure is growing on ministers to speed up home-buying reforms south of the border.

The legal process for property deals in Slough, Britain's slowest local authority, takes an average of seven and a half months — or 229 days — to go from a sale being agreed to completion, according to Rightmove. In Clackmannanshire it is only 76 days.

The research shows that the ten fastest areas for deals to go through are all in Scotland, reflecting the different system that operates there.

Last month the government promised to transform the buying and selling process in England and Wales to become similar to that in Scotland, where legally binding agreements are made earlier in the process and a financial penalty is payable if a buyer or seller pulls out.

It hopes this will end the practice of gazumping, which is when a seller accepts one offer but then backs out after accepting a higher one from a different buyer. However, new legislation is not due on this — or separate rules forcing sellers to provide buyers with mandatory packs — until 2029.

Johan Svanstrom, Rightmove's chief executive, said the figures showed the need to speed up reforms. "A healthy housing market depends on people being able to move home easily and with certainty," he said.

The combination of a slow buying process, expensive mortgages, pricier stamp duty and inflation placing a strain on buyers, has meant that deals in London are now taking the longest since Rightmove's records began, with 174 days from a sale being agreed to completion, nearly six months.

The east of England, at 171 days, and southeast, at 170, are similarly affected. By contrast, deals in Scotland take an average of 98 days, ahead of the north-east, where they take 141 days. Deals in Wales take 155 days on average. Nationally, 23 per cent of deals fall through.

Brad Fordham, head of mortgage distribution at NatWest Group, said that digitising the homebuying and selling process would help. "Delays within the conveyancing journey cause emotional distress and real financial costs for our customers," he said.

Nick Leeming, chairman of the estate agency Jackson-Stops, added: "Reforming the homebuying and selling process must remain a priority."

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Shell touts green spending amid ‘very worrying’ fires

Emily Gosden Energy Editor

Wildfires sweeping Europe are “very worrying”, the boss of Shell has said, as the oil and gas major cashed in on high prices to make bumper profits of almost $10 billion.

Wael Sawan insisted that Shell was not “just a fossil fuel company”, despite having ditched many of its renewables investments, and called on governments to implement carbon taxes that would drive customer demand for green energy.

Addressing the wildfires, which scientists say have been made more likely by man-made climate change, he added: “It’s devastating. Every time I see the images on TV, my heart goes out to the many who are suffering from it.”

Sawan was speaking as Europe’s biggest oil and gas company reported its second-biggest quarterly profit on record, with high and volatile prices caused by the US war with Iran more than offsetting the disruption to its operations in the Middle East.

The FTSE 100 group reported adjusted earnings of $9.8 billion in the second quarter, more than double the $4.3 billion it made in the same period of 2025.

The shutdown of the Strait of Hormuz, the crucial waterway through which a fifth of the world’s oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) normally passes, has caused havoc in global energy markets and kept prices high through the second quarter. Shell said it sold oil for an average of $89 per barrel in the second quarter, up from $64 a barrel in the same period last year.

Sawan said that “the high commodity prices were a big part of the results”, along with Shell’s ability to “create value out of trading”. He added: “We are built for times of volatility.”

The profit was second only to the $11.5 billion Shell reported in the second quarter of 2022 in the aftermath of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Shell’s production in its integrated gas division, which comprises LNG and gas-to-liquids, slumped by 31 per cent due to the shutdown of Qatari LNG production and damage to the Pearl gas-to-liquids plant in the country.

Shell also announced that it would buy back a further $3 billion of its own shares in the coming quarter.

Its shares rose 1.5 per cent after the earnings came in significantly higher than the $8.9 billion analysts had been expecting. However, the stock closed down 4½p, or 0.1 per cent, at £33.19.

Shell employs 85,000 people in 70 countries with operations ranging from oil and gas exploration to fuel retailing. It pumped the equivalent of almost 2.5 million barrels of oil per day in the quarter and is the world’s biggest independent trader of LNG.

Sawan, who has led the company since 2023, has abandoned many of the green investments made under his predecessor Ben van Beurden and is seeking to grow its gas business.

Robert Palmer, deputy director at Uplift, the environmental campaign group, said: “As Europe battles devastating wildfires, Shell is cashing in on Trump’s war and doubling down on oil and gas. The world is literally on fire and Shell wants to add more fuel.”

The last rig from the Brent Field in the

Sawan said that Shell was working to halve the carbon emissions from its own oil and gas production operations and insisted it was also “investing in green technology”.

He said: “We are investing in the largest green hydrogen facility in all of Europe, which should start up early next year. We’re one of the largest investors in the world in carbon capture and sequestration. We’re the second-largest EV charging player after Tesla, and we put overall $20 billion of capital into this space.

“There is always more that we can and should be doing, but this is going to require everyone leaning in.”

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Anglo confirms De Beers sale is in ‘the final stages’

Emily Gosden

Anglo American says it is in “the final stages” of selling De Beers but denied it was in exclusive talks with any one bidder for the ailing diamond miner.

The FTSE 100 group, which is in the process of merging with Canada’s Teck, has been reported to be nearing a deal to offload its 85 per cent stake in De Beers for only $1 billion. That would be a fraction of its value just a few years ago, underscoring the challenges in the diamond market.

The government of Botswana, which holds 15 per cent of De Beers, said this month that Anglo American had picked a consortium led by the former De Beers chief executive Gareth Penny as its “preferred bidder”.

However, Duncan Wanblad, Anglo American’s chief executive, said: “We are not exclusive with any particular consortium at this particular point in time, and there are more than one in the process.” He said that although it was “pretty much in the final stages” of the sale, “this is also probably one of the most challenging times of the sale process, just given the number of parties that we need to all get aligned”.

He added: “We are hopeful that we’ll be getting to conclusion here during the second half of this year.”

De Beers has struggled with weak demand amid the rise of lab-grown diamonds. In February, Anglo wrote down the value of its stake in De Beers for the third time in as many years. The carrying value for De Beers as a whole has been slashed from $9.4 billion in 2022 to just $2.3 billion as of February.

Anglo reported a 35 per cent rise in underlying earnings before interest, taxation and other charges to $4 billion, driven by higher copper prices.

Shares in Anglo American closed up 124p, or 3.4 per cent, at £37.26.

IAN FORSYTH/GETTY IMAGES

North Sea is towed into the River Tees to be dismantled in 2024. Shell is awaiting approval for new North Sea projects

‘Approve North Sea investment’

Shell has appealed to Andy Burnham to approve its planned fields in the North Sea and maintain support for carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects (Emily Gosden writes).

Wael Sawan, Shell’s chief executive, also warned that uncertainty over the future fiscal regime for the North Sea was resulting in money being invested elsewhere. “The most important thing for the energy sector is stability,” he said. “A more durable fiscal framework would undoubtedly attract more capital into the UK North Sea.”

Adura, Shell’s North Sea joint venture with Equinor, is developing the Jackdaw gasfield and the Rosebank oilfield, but is awaiting approval from the government after a court ruled the original consents unlawful.

Sawan called for the government to “expedite the approvals for Jackdaw and Rosebank”, arguing that using domestic resources rather than imports would result in higher tax proceeds, more jobs and greater energy security.

The previous government earmarked the energy department as one that would shoulder some cuts to free up cash for defence spending, fuelling speculation that support for CCS may be cut.

Sawan argued that CCS “plays to the UK’s advantage” as the country has depleted reservoirs that can be used to store carbon dioxide and industrial clusters able to capture the gas.

“I recognise the government has some tough choices as it’s deciding where its marginal dollar goes,” he said. “But whatever they do, the biggest plea is stability.”

Rolls renews plea on taxpayer cash for short-haul

Emma Powell

The boss of Rolls-Royce has renewed his call for up to £1 billion from the taxpayer to fund its move into the short-haul aircraft market, as the aerospace group raised its performance outlook for the year.

The FTSE 100 aerospace engineer, which makes engines for larger Boeing and Airbus planes, expects adjusted operating profit of between £4.7 billion and £4.9 billion and free cashflow of £3.8 billion to £4 billion, despite the conflict in the Middle East.

Performance was boosted by improving the profitability of engine maintenance contracts in its civil aviation business, chief executive Tufan Erginbilgic said. The business is aiming to double the average “time on wing” of its wide-body engines.

Rolls-Royce shares, which have risen more than 1,360 per cent since Erginbilgic took charge at the start of 2023, closed up 79p, or 5.7 per cent, at £14.59.

Revenue rose 20 per cent to £11.4 billion during the first six months of the year, above the £10.2 billion consensus forecast from City analysts. Underlying operating profit was up 46 per cent to £2.5 billion.

Rolls-Royce had previously guided towards full-year underlying operating profit of between £4 billion and £4.2 billion, and free cashflow of £3.6 billion to £3.8 billion.

It has returned £1.4 billion of the £2.5 billion in share buybacks planned for this year, after proposing in February to return between £7 billion and £9 billion by the end of 2028.

The lift to full-year financial guidance came as Erginbilgic reiterated plans to take Rolls back into the $1 trillion short-haul aircraft market, which is currently dominated by Pratt & Whitney of the US and its fellow American giant GE in a joint venture with Safran of France.

Rolls has since 2011 concentrated on the long-haul market, making engines for the likes of the Airbus A350 and the Boeing 787. However, the short-haul market is “eight to nine times” bigger than the wide-body market, Erginbilgic said.

The company, which is based in Derby, is pressing the government for funding thought to amount to up to several hundred million pounds. The total programme could be worth a total of £40 billion to £50 billion in investment, Erginbilgic said.

Defending the request for government support, Erginbilgic insisted that Rolls-Royce was competing with American companies that were getting “three, four times more funding than we do”, adding that the investment programme would also be “good for taxpayers”.

“Effectively, this programme will transform advanced manufacturing in the UK, create up to 40,000 jobs [and] supply chain development,” he said.

£4.9bn

Upper range of anticipated profit

Source: Rolls-Royce

Erginbilgic would not be drawn on whether he had met the prime minister, Andy Burnham, and John Healey, the chancellor, to discuss his funding request since they took up their new positions, but said that he “never stops talking to the government”, including on this topic. He added that the government was “supportive”.

At the Farnborough airshow earlier this month he renewed a threat to go “elsewhere” to manufacture the engines, amid fears that without taxpayer support Rolls could move the business to Germany or the US, meaning that Britain could lose tens of thousands of future jobs.

The next three years would be crucial to disrupting the two American incumbents and presenting airlines with a “demonstrator” engine, Erginbilgic said, as airlines upgrade their fleets.

He added: “You are either in or out [in the] next three years.”

BAE’s order book swells to £84bn

Emma Powell

Britain’s defence champion has cashed in on higher military spending from governments globally, raising its financial guidance for the year.

BAE Systems, which makes fighter jets, artillery and missiles as well as nuclear submarines, expects sales growth of between 8 and 10 per cent this year and underlying profit growth of 10 to 12 per cent, up from ranges of 7 to 9 per cent and 9 to 11 per cent respectively.

The UK defence contractor has benefited from a sharp rise in orders from governments since the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the conflict in the Middle East.

Charles Woodburn, BAE Systems’ chief executive, said: “The global threat picture remains highly volatile and governments are responding with sustained increases in defence budgets.”

In the UK, defence spending is set to rise from 2.3 per cent to 3.5 per cent of GDP by 2035. But Woodburn warned in an interview with the BBC last week that the reality of modern warfare had “changed quite profoundly” and that UK defence spending had to change with it. “This is by far the most threatening time I’ve seen,” he said.

BAE has signed a contract to support Turkey’s Eurofighter Typhoon fleet

Orders worth £16.4 billion were secured during the first half of the year, including a £2.5 billion contract to provide training, support equipment and services to Turkey’s recently ordered Typhoon aircraft, taking the total order backlog to £84 billion. This year it secured a seven-year contract to upgrade the US Terminal High Altitude Area Defense interceptor missile, designed to destroy ballistic missiles.

Revenue rose 8 per cent to £14.6 billion over the first six months of the year, while pre-tax profit was up by the same level to £1.3 billion.

BAE employs more than 110,000 staff, including almost 47,000 in the UK. Nearly half of BAE’s business is in the US, while in excess of a quarter is in the UK. About a tenth comes from Saudi Arabia, whose air force operates BAE Typhoon fighters.

The government holds a “golden share” in the company, which gives it the right to veto a takeover of BAE on national security grounds.

The shares, which have risen almost 20 per cent this year, were up 30p, or 1.5 per cent, at £20.50.

The company returned £933 million to shareholders in the first half, including £251 million in share buybacks.

BP cutting 700 jobs in overhaul under new boss

Emily Gosden

BP has told staff it is cutting 700 “non-frontline” jobs as part of its simplification drive.

The roles will go from what was the “production and operations” division, which has been replaced by a more conventional “upstream” division as part of an overhaul by new boss Meg O’Neill.

BP will report second-quarter results on Tuesday, when analysts are forecasting a surge in profits to $5.1 billion, up from just over $2 billion in the same period of last year, on the back of higher oil and gas prices. Despite this, Gordon Birrell, head of upstream, told staff that global market signals pointed to “potential oversupply and lower oil and gas prices”, the FT reported.

BP employed 93,700 people globally as of the end of 2025. The group has been struggling since an ill-fated pivot to green energy in 2020. Last year it announced 4,700 job cuts as well as the loss of 3,000 contractor roles.

O’Neill joined at the start of April with a remit to simplify BP and shore up its balance sheet. Her tenure has already been eventful, with the company removing its chairman Albert Manifold in May over allegations of bullying, which he denies.

The job cuts equate to about 8 per cent of the non-frontline roles in the old production and operations business The division included most of what is now “upstream” — exploration and production — but also included some responsibilities for “downstream” refining and marketing operations.

BP said: “We are building a simpler, stronger, more valuable BP. As part of this process, we are proposing changes that would result in a reduction in roles, intended to reduce complexity, improve accountability and support long-term performance.”

Paternity leave firing costs Goldman £1.4m

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

A senior Goldman Sachs executive has been awarded nearly £1.5 million after being sacked for failing to respond quickly to a work email while on paternity leave.

An employment tribunal ruled two years ago that Jonathan Reeves was unfairly dismissed from his job in London after suffering sex discrimination while on a six-month break after the birth of his child.

He sued the US investment bank for £3.8 million in damages, but a specialist judge has now awarded him £1.45 million after the original tribunal found there had been a 50 per cent chance that the bank would have fairly made him redundant.

Reeves was a senior compliance officer at the bank's London office, having joined Goldman in Salt Lake City in 2007. He was transferred to the UK six years later, after also doing a stint at the bank's outpost in Sydney.

The original employment tribunal heard that in 2022 Reeves requested six months' paternal leave — a period that was allowed under the bank's policy — before the birth of his second child.

During that leave, he and his wife travelled to Cornwall for the August bank holiday. The original tribunal heard that on that drive he received an email highlighting a "very urgent control room issue" and that Michael Richman, the bank's compliance chief, "required it to be resolved urgently".

Other senior executives were also contacted and Reeves also received an email from Omar Beer, who was in charge of the bank's global control room, saying simply: "Need to talk — are you available." The tribunal noted that Reeves "was not regularly checking his emails when he was driving".

Beer emailed Reeves the next day and another colleague telephoned him. The tribunal went on to record that Reeves "then worked over his holiday to assist in resolving the issue".

Beer also accepted that he had not telephoned Reeves to alert him initially to the urgent issue.

However, evidence emerged at the tribunal hearing that during a subsequent internal grievance procedure that led to the decision to sack Reeves, Beer described him as "kind of lazy".

In a ruling handed down this week at the London Central employment tribunal, Reeves was awarded £1.45 million in compensation, which included damages for injury to feelings and past and future economic losses. The tribunal noted that the legal action had hampered his efforts to find another role.

Reeves declined to comment on the ruling but his solicitor, Jo Keddie, at the law firm Forsters, said the judgment emphasised that stigma damages were not theoretical.

Jonathan Reeves was contacted by senior executives while on his six-month break

"For senior professionals in regulated industries, litigation can have profound career implications, and this case demonstrates that the tribunal will recognise this where supported by clear and compelling evidence," Keddie said.

Kim Wright, an employment law specialist at Birketts, said the ruling sent the message that "businesses cannot promote generous parental leave policies as part of a glossy recruitment and retention strategy and then disadvantage employees for taking advantage of those benefits".

Goldman Sachs said in a statement that it was a market leader in paid parental leave and encouraged all working parents, regardless of gender, to take the 26 weeks paid leave offered.

"We strongly disagree with this [tribunal] decision," a spokesman said. There was no comment on whether the bank would apply to appeal.

Landlord buys into Burnham bounce

Hammerson is buying into Andy Burnham's gospel of "Manchesterism" with the acquisition of a 50 per cent stake in the city's Arndale shopping centre for £218 million (Tom Howard writes).

The landlord, which already owns the Bullring in Birmingham and Cabot Circus in Bristol, acquired the half-share from lenders who inherited Manchester Arndale when Intu Properties collapsed in 2020.

To fund the deal, Hammerson is tapping shareholders for an extra £190 million.

"We've been tracking this shopping centre for a long time," Rob Wilkinson, Hammerson's chief executive, said. "We like Manchester a lot and we didn't have anything in Manchester. We think we can add further value to [the centre] by improving the retail mix, leasing up the vacant space and improving the public realm." The asset manager M&G (MNG) owns the other 50 per cent.

The Manchester Arndale was built in the Seventies at a cost of £100 million. About 45 million people visit the mall each year. It has more than 200 shops, restaurants and leisure venues, including M&S, Selfridges and Urban Playground — a "competitive socialising" concept, blending gaming, mini-golf and casual dining.

Hammerson is one of the country's largest retail landlords, with a £3.6 billion portfolio of malls that includes Westquay in Southampton, Ilac in Dublin, and The Oracle in Reading.

During the pandemic Hammerson, loaded with billions of pounds of debts at a time when valuations of its malls were in freefall, looked as if it might go the same way as Intu. It was turned around by its chief executive at the time, Rita-Rose Gagné, who strengthened the balance sheet by selling off "non-core" centres and whittling the portfolio down to a dozen or so "destination" malls in England, Ireland and France.

The business has been back in growth mode over the past year, buying out its joint venture (JV) partners at the Bullring, The Oracle and Westquay as Gagné sought to exit complex partnerships.

Wilkinson, who took over this year, defended his decision to go against that strategy. "While we would always prefer to own 100 per cent [of a centre], we're not against JVs per se," he said. "We've bought out partners who'd made the decision that they no longer wished to be invested in shopping centres, so they were not like-minded.

"M&G is a long-term investor, like us. Their business plan [for the Arndale] is very much aligned with ours. [JVs] are really more about the partner. They are also a way for us to access opportunity."

Intu had co-owned Manchester Arndale since 2005, when it bought the 50 per cent stake that was previously owned by Prudential, the insurer, for about £400 million.

Such has been the decline in shopping centre values that Hammerson is paying little more than half what Intu paid 21 years ago.

Malls have come under pressure from online shopping, which caused some big tenants to go bust.

J MORRIS/SHUTTERSTOCK

ALADDINS CAVE

Princess Anne opened the Arndale centre in Manchester in 1979. It cost £100 million to build

Charge on data centre developers is 'quite positive' for Segro

Tom Howard Property Correspondent

The head of one of Britain's biggest data centre developers believes the energy regulator's proposal to charge tens of millions of pounds to connect new projects to the electricity grid could actually be "quite positive" for its ambitions.

David Sleath, the long-time chief executive of Segro, Europe's largest owner of warehouses and data centres, acknowledged that there would be a "cashflow impact" from Ofgem's plan to introduce a "commitment fee" for projects that wanted to join the queue to connect to the grid. However, he thinks the proposal, if brought in, would ultimately benefit Segro, because it would be likely to shorten the wait times to get a grid connection.

"I don't think the proposals are there to penalise the serious people like us," Sleath said. "If it does weed out the more speculative [projects], it could enable people like us to get further up the queue and get faster access to power, which would be quite positive for us."

Currently it is inexpensive for developers to put in an application to get a grid connection for their project, which has created a long waiting list. There are 315 data centre projects in the queue waiting to be connected, according to Ofgem.

The watchdog said it was "concerned that a significant number of projects in the queue may not ultimately proceed" and were holding back development of new data centres that are ready to go.

Sleath, 65, agreed that many of those in the queue were speculative developments "without any realistic prospect of delivery".

"There are all kinds of [developers] in the queue that have got a piece of land that might be suitable for a data centre development, but it probably doesn't have planning and maybe never will get planning," he said. "If some of that more speculative development can get thrown out, we can bring forward ours a lot quicker, I suspect."

Ofgem has proposed charging between £237,500 and £712,500 per megawatt (MW) for projects that want to connect to the grid. This would be refunded once the data centre was in operation but would be lost if the project was not completed.

Segro has a near-term data centre pipeline of 650MW. In theory this means that it would face a bill of up to £463 million to connect these projects to the grid under Ofgem's plans.

This would be "a timing issue rather than a real cash cost, because you'll get it back when you energise the data centre", Sleath said.

Ofgem has a consultation on its proposals, which runs until September 16.

Segro shares, which fell on Wednesday when Ofgem first announced its proposal, closed down 3¼p, or 0.4 per cent, at 966½p last night.

World Cup marketing blitz hits bottom line at Adidas

Martin Strydom

Adidas shares fell sharply after second-quarter profits missed expectations, dragged down by increased spending on marketing for the World Cup.

The German sportswear maker's operating profit in the April to June period rose by 5 per cent to €574 million, well below analysts' expectations for €623 million, as a 30 per cent rise to €212 million in marketing expenses tied to the tournament ate into the bottom line.

Adidas shares fell by 11.5 per cent, overshadowing an event that the company's chief executive, Bjorn Gulden, described as a "fairytale" success. Adidas sponsored a total of 14 national teams in the Fifa World Cup, including both finalists, Argentina and Spain.

Gulden said: "The growth related to the World Cup was ... accelerated by our strategy of increasing product availability in the interest of our consumers and retail partners versus optimising inventories."

He added: "Our marketing campaign 'Backyard Legends' brought back the love for the game the way we used to play it in the streets."

Net sales in the quarter rose 13 per cent to €6.74 billion, beating market expectations of sales of €6.63 billion.

Visits to Adidas retail stores in the United States rose 44.7 per cent year-on-year in the week of June 15, the first full week of World Cup group-stage action, according to Placer.ai, a company that gathers foot traffic data.

Adidas said it now expected revenue to grow by a currency-adjusted 9 per cent to 10 per cent, compared with previous guidance for high single-digit growth. It still expected operating profit to increase to about €2.3 billion this year.

The rise in second-quarter profits was driven by double-digit growth in all regions except Europe, where heavy discounting at many retailers put lifestyle footwear under pressure, the company said.

Investors had been hoping that the visibility from the World Cup would help Adidas to maintain its sales momentum as the success of its retro Samba and Gazelle sneakers fades.

The company faces competition from fast-growing challenger brands such as On Running and Deckers, the parent company of Hoka, which have captured market share in key technical running and lifestyle categories.

It also needs to stay ahead of Nike, which has been repositioning itself to focus on athletes after the return of Elliott Hill, a Nike veteran who left the company in 2020 but rejoined in 2024 as chief executive to lead its turnaround efforts.

Citi analysts said that the Adidas sales were still "well below" hopes for faster growth. "Combined with the more pronounced World Cup top-line benefit, this is likely to reignite the debate around growth sustainability post-tournament," they said.

Analysts at Deutsche Bank wrote in a note to investors, pointing to the profit miss: "In absolute terms [the second quarter] was a good quarter but against a rising tide of World Cup expectations this is going to disappoint investors."

Adidas shares, which had been on a strong run since April, are now down about 4 per cent so far this year.

In a separate statement, Adidas said Birgit Kretschmer would become chief financial officer at the end of the year after Harm Ohlmeyer's decision not to extend his current term.

Felix Jonathan Dennl, analyst at the Frankfurt-based Metzler, said: "We think the adverse share price reaction is a cocktail of Harm Ohlmeyer not extending his contract coupled with the 8 per cent ebitda miss."

VUK VALCIC/ALAMY

Adidas enjoyed a "fairytale" World Cup, including sponsoring the winners Spain, but markets were unconvinced

Beckham's beer does the business for AB InBev

Simon Freeman

The brewing giant AB Inbev's World Cup sponsorship helped drive double-digit sales growth in its "megabrands" Corona, Stella Artois and Michelob Ultra but a slowdown in China took the shine off the strong performance.

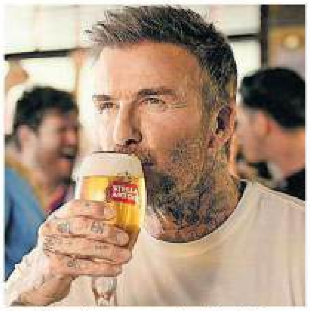
Shares in the world's biggest beer maker were down 0.2 per cent in Brussels at €73.76 despite its posting forecast-beating revenue, profit and volumes for the June quarter. The stock has gained more than a third so far this year as investor optimism flows back to the sector following a difficult 2025.

The Budweiser maker reported a 5.8 per cent rise in second-quarter operating profit, above the 4.6 per cent growth expected by analysts. Revenue also beat forecasts, while volumes rose for a second consecutive quarter after years of decline.

AB InBev said Corona, Stella Artois and Michelob Ultra posted revenue growth of 17, 19 and 21 per cent respectively outside their home markets, helped by the World Cup, for which the brewer was a major sponsor.

That was despite teams from some of its most important markets, such as Brazil and Mexico, being knocked out relatively early. AB InBev has a smaller footprint in European countries such as Spain, which won the tournament.

Michel Doukeris, chief executive, said: "It could have been better, but it was very good."



David Beckham stars in a World Cup advert for AB Inbev's Stella Artois

In the United States, however, sales to wholesalers and retailers fell. Volumes also declined 9.7 per cent in China, where AB InBev has performed worse than rivals in an industry-wide downturn.

Doukeris flagged a slight decline in consumer confidence between the first and second quarter as the Iran war drove up gas and oil prices. Extreme heat in Europe, meanwhile, is not good for either people or beer sales, he said.

James Edwardes Jones, RBC Capital Markets analyst, said: "There were a few puts and takes, but in aggregate this was a solid performance."

Hot weather drives rise at Magnum

Simon Freeman

Magnum sold almost €5 billion of ice cream in the first half of the year as the heatwave across Europe sent consumers in search of cold treats.

Core earnings were ahead of market expectations, with revenue up 4.2 per cent to €4.7 billion, driven by growth in both volume and pricing.

The Unilever spin-off saw growth in both sales and market share in every region. Sales of Ben & Jerry's grew 9.2 per cent in the second quarter, driven by the launch of new stock and ice-cream cookie sandwiches. And Yasso, a high-protein, low-calorie frozen yoghurt, sustained double-digit growth with the launch of one-pint fridge packs.

"Our key summer selling season got off to a strong start," Peter ter Kulve, Magnum chief executive, said. "We grew and gained share in all regions."

A cost-cutting drive targeting €500 million in the medium term delivered €90 million of savings in the first half, mostly by cutting waste, smoothing supply chains and lowering overheads.

Net profit fell €349 million, from €464 million for the division in the same period last year, driven by higher financing and restructuring costs after its separation from Unilever, and inflation in Turkey devaluing the lire.

"This sales beat was driven by both higher volumes as well as by better-than-expected pricing and mix," ING analysts said.

Magnum shares, which have gained nearly 25 per cent since being floated in Amsterdam at €12.80 in December, closed up 0.1 per cent at €16.16.

Agreements signed for new hospitals

Robert Miller

The government signed 11 long-term contracts for new hospitals across England yesterday, including in Manchester, Cornwall and Great Yarmouth.

The agreements bring together NHS trusts and leading construction companies to deliver 11 hospital schemes through the government's New Hospital Programme, aiming to build the facilities more efficiently.

Karin Smyth, a health minister, said: "For too long, the construction of new hospitals has been bogged down by bureaucratic procurement processes, even after full approval and funding was in place, and we're determined to change that.

"The changes announced are a major step forward in streamlining the procurement process. Patients can look forward to new hospitals being delivered quicker, industry can plan with certainty and taxpayers can be assured that we are getting maximum value for their money."

Natalie Forrest, chief programme officer for the scheme, said: "The Hospital 2.0 Alliance marks an important milestone for the New Hospital Programme and a new way of delivering major public infrastructure.

"By bringing together NHS organisations and industry as genuine partners, we're creating a model that combines national consistency with local leadership."

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PRICE CRASH £167.39 inc.VAT
WAS £185.99 inc.VAT

LIFT CAP. 2.5T

CTJ2500QLGB
020112803

CLARKE 2 TONNE QUICK LIFT LOW PROFILE TROLLEY JACK

2 TONNE

PRICE CRASH £155.98 inc.VAT
WAS £179.98 inc.VAT

BEST SELLER

CTJ2QLP
020111820

SAVE £24 inc.VAT

£ PRICE CRASH

GENERATORS

SEE ALL 9 ONLINE — OFFER ENDS 04/08/26

CLARKE DUAL VOLTAGE PETROL GENERATOR

BEST SELLER

PG3800ADV
010617854

3.0kW

DUAL VOLTAGE 230 & 110 VOLT

PRICE CRASH £262.80 inc.VAT
WAS £310.80 inc.VAT

SAVE £48 inc.VAT

CLARKE PETROL INVERTER GENERATOR

2.2kW

IG2300
010612302

INVERTER

SAVE £60 inc.VAT

PRICE CRASH £358.80 inc.VAT
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CONVENIENT, DURABLE, SAFE AND EASY TO USE

SPECIAL OFFER ENDS 04/08/2026

BEST SELLER

450kg MAX LOAD

★★★★★
"Top quality bike lift capable of lifting my big heavy Harley-Davidson with ease and stability."
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GREAT FOR PROVIDING EASY ACCESS TO MOTORCYCLES:
• Foot pedal operated hydraulic motorcycle lift • Safety locking device
• Hinged ramp for easy loading

SPECIAL OFFER ends 04/08/2026
£449.00 inc.VAT
WAS £526.80 inc.VAT

CML3
020110143

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RUBBER PADS FOR SECURING THE MOTORCYCLE FRONT WHEEL

Clarke MINI DUMPER TRUCK

SPECIAL OFFER ENDS 04/08/2026

BIG 125 LITRE BUCKET

SPECIAL OFFER ends 04/08/2026
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WAS £1,258.80 inc.VAT

SAVE £260 inc.VAT

6.5HP PETROL ENGINE

ALL TERRAIN TYRES

CDT300
050710875

4 WHEEL DRIVE

3 FORWARD GEAR WITH REVERSE

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WAS £92.39 inc.VAT

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PRICE CUT £57.59 inc.VAT
WAS £59.98 inc.VAT

SOLIDS TO 35MM

PSV3A
051016042

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WAS £298.80 inc.VAT

HSEC650A
051011650

BEST SELLER

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LOW NOISE AIR COMPRESSORS

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BUILT TO COMBINE ULTRA-QUIET OPERATION WITH HIGH PERFORMANCE

The range covers air displacement values up to 16.9cfm, all units have a maximum working pressure of 8bar and an input supply of 230V/50Hz. Shhh Air Max models are oil free & feature an adjustable airflow regulator, plus tank and outlet pressure gauges

ALL CLARKE COMPRESSORS ARE FULLY TESTED & EU COMPLIANT

SHHH 50/350
000112450

OIL FREE

8bar 116psi

Model	Air Disp.	Rec Cap	Order Code	inc.VAT
Shhh 24/150	7cfm	24L	000112440	£167.98
Shhh 50/150	7cfm	50L	000112445	£215.98
Shhh 50/350	16.9cfm	50L	000112450	£334.80

3 PRODUCTS IN THE RANGE

FROM £167.98 inc.VAT

BARNSLEY, S71 1HA	01226 732297	CHESTER, CH1 3EY	01244 311258	GATESHEAD, NE8 4XA	0191 493 2520	LONDON CATFORD, SE6 3HD	0208 695 5684	PETERBOROUGH, PE1 2PE	01733 311770	SWANSEA, SA7 9AG	01792 792969
B'HAM GT. BARR, B43 6NR	0121 358 7977	COLCHESTER, CO1 1RE	01206 762831	GLASGOW, G4 9EJ	0141 332 9231	LONDON EDMONTON, N18 0TD	0208 803 0861	PLYMOUTH, PL4 9HY	01752 254050	SWINDON, SN1 3AW	01793 491717
B'HAM HAY MILLS, B25 8DA	0121 771 3433	COVENTRY, CV1 1HT	02476 224227	GLOUCESTER, GL1 4HY	01452 417948	LONDON LEYTON, E10 7EB	0208 558 8284	POOLE, BH14 9HT	01202 717913	TWICKENHAM, TW1 4AW	0208 892 9117
BOLTON, BL3 6BD	01204 365799	CROYDON, CR2 6EU	0208 763 0640	GRIMSBY, DN32 9BD	01472 354435	LUTON, LU4 8JS	01582 728063	PORTSMOUTH, PO3 5EF	02392 654777	WARRINGTON, WA2 8JP	01925 630937
BRADFORD, BD1 3BN	01274 390962	DARLINGTON, DL1 1RB	01325 380841	HULL, HU9 1EG	01482 223161	MAIDSTONE, ME15 6HE	01622 769572	PRESTON, PR2 6BU	01772 703263	WIGAN, WN5 9AU	01942 323785
BRISTOL, BS5 9JJ	0117 935 1060	DEAL KENT, CT14 6BQ	01304 373434	ILFORD, IG2 7HU	0208 518 4286	MC OPENSHAW, M11 1AA	0161 223 8376	SHEFFIELD, S2 4HJ	0114 258 0831	WOLVERHAMPTON, WV4 6EL	01902 494186
BURTON, DE14 3QZ	01283 564708	DERBY, DE1 2ED	01332 290931	IPSWICH, IP1 1UZ	01473 221253	MANSFIELD, NG19 7AR	01623 622160	SIDCUP, DA15 9LU	0208 3042069	WORCESTER, WR1 1JZ	01905 723451
CAMBRIDGE, CB4 3HL	01223 322675	DONCASTER, DN2 4NY	01302 245999	LEEDS, LS4 2AS	0113 231 0400	MIDDLESBROUGH, TS17 6BZ	01642 677881	SOUTHAMPTON, SO17 2SP	02380 557788		
CARDIFF, CF24 3DN	02920 465424	DUNDEE, DD1 3ET	01382 225140	LEICESTER, LE4 6PN	0116 261 0688	NORWICH, NR2 4LZ	01603 766402	SOUTHEND, SS9 3LJ	01702 483742		
CARLISLE, CA1 2LG	01228 591666	EDINBURGH, EH8 7BR	0131 659 5919	LINCOLN, LN5 8HG	01522 543036	NORTHAMPTON, NN5 5JW	01604 267840	STOKE-ON-TRENT, ST1 5EH	01782 287321		
CHELTENHAM, GL52 2EH	01242 514402	EXETER, EX2 8GQ	01392 256744	LIVERPOOL, L3 5HF	0151 709 4484	NOTTINGHAM, NG1 1GN	0115 956 1811	SUNDERLAND, SR7 9QF	0191 510 8773		

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Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips

Plenty of vim in soft drinks maker

NICHOLS

Market cap	Sales in Africa
£377 million	70 million litres

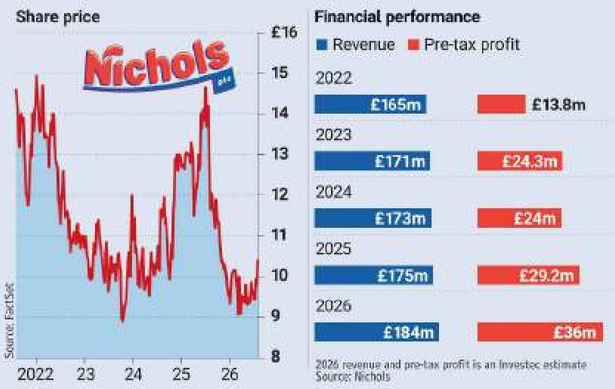
The maker of Vimto, Nichols, enjoyed strong sales in Africa and made a record amount of cash in the first half of the year. When combined with a new dividend policy that returns more of that cash to shareholders then the shares, which are nearing multi-year lows, begin to look attractive.

The Aim-listed soft drinks maker reported solid first-half trading. Revenue was up 4.7 per cent to £89.5 million, and pre-tax profits were up 32 per cent to £15 million, leaving management confident to lift the interim dividend by 34.7 per cent to 20.2p, payable on September 11 and going ex-dividend on August 6. They also loosened the purse strings by changing the earnings cover on the dividend from two times to one and a half times, which will increase future payouts.

The business has an asset-light model. It makes the concentrated Vimto syrup to a secret recipe in the UK and leaves the bottling, carbonation and distribution to local partners around the world. The results are being driven by shifting bottling from a plant in Spain to a new bottling partner in Senegal, with another new facility in Ivory Coast due by the end of the year.

This new structure means the local African partner can pay lower import taxes, allowing it to buy more concentrate and freeing up cash to offer promotions to consumers. The African region is the fastest growing in the group with a 17.2 per cent jump in sales when compared to the same period last year; it contributed 13 per cent of the group total for the full year.

Sugar rush



2026 revenue and pre-tax profit is an Investec estimate
Source: Nichols

ADVICE Buy
WHY Record cash levels can fund growth or be returned to shareholders, which seems to have been overlooked

The high-sugar juice has been the unofficial drink to break the Ramadan fast, known as *iftar*, in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for more than a century. Thankfully, with distribution through the Suez Canal and overland from Jeddah, Vimto distribution has been unaffected by the conflict in Iran.

The sales in this region, which contribute 7 per cent of the group total, are heavily weighted to the second half.

The UK is still the largest part of the business, where the brand is second only to Robinson's, contributing 75 per cent of total sales. Here progress was more muted, up just 2.3 per cent, but it is hoped that tying in the Vimto flavour with new markets such as Myprotein powders, and energy gels and electrolyte tablets from Applied Nutrition, will boost sales.

Nichols also supplies direct to cinemas and restaurants. Out-of-home sales has proved a challenging market after the pandemic and in the cost of living crisis. The Starslush iced drink brand that came through the 2015 acquisition of Noisy Drinks was axed last year; the focus is now on ICEE frozen drinks, for which Nichols holds the UK licence.

The tough sales environment in the UK and investment in new accounting software has seen some chunky one-off costs in previous years, but thankfully there were none in first half. Management are now focused on using the cash pile, forecast to hit £70 million by the year end, on acquiring new brands where they see fit, or failing that returning the cash to shareholders. Analysts from the broker Investec estimate that could equate to a special dividend of 30p every year for the next five years, boosting the forecast full-year 47p ordinary dividend to 77p, or a yield of 7.4 per cent.

The shares have fallen a long way since their 2017 peak of £19. The company was hit by a sharp rise in import taxes in the Middle East on sugary drinks at the end of 2019. Rising wages and cost inflation have also compressed the pre-tax profit margin from a peak of 24 per cent a decade ago to 16.8 per cent in June.

With full-year pre-tax profit forecast at £36 million, giving 72.5p in earnings per share, then the shares trading on 14 times earnings and near decade lows are now at a significant discount to the ten-year average earnings ratio of 20 times.

True, Nichols is a risky bet, being Aim-listed and exposed to emerging markets — but a weaker dollar is providing a tailwind, as shown this week by results at Unilever. The hot summer in the UK should also help and hold the shares for two years. There is also the benefit of halving inheritance tax through business property relief, while collecting that chunky dividend income.

Termites bite Rentokil as investors dig mining

MARKET REPORT

The damage caused by termites in America has wrought havoc with the finances of the London-listed Rentokil Initial, not to mention its share price (Charlotte Bend writes).

The FTSE 100 constituent, once dubbed "the Queen's rat catcher" for the royal warrants that it held, said yesterday it had set aside an additional $47 million provision to settle historical compensation claims relating to damage suffered to properties protected by Terminix, the US rival it bought for $6.7 billion in 2021. It takes the total the business has set aside to cover the claims to $392 million.

Despite the additional termite hit, Rentokil reported a decent set of half-year results with revenue up 6.7 per cent to $3.6 billion, from $3.4 billion in the same period a year ago, and an 18.4 per cent rise in pre-tax profit to $263 million. Investors were not impressed, however, and headed for the exit, sending the shares down 91¼p, or 20.6 per cent, to 352p, making it by far the biggest faller on the main index.

It would be unfair to blame Rentokil's double-digit fall for the FTSE 100 closing in the red and narrowly missing out on a new record. But until late afternoon the Footsie had been as high as 10,979.60, compared with the record close of 10,910.55 on February 27. At the end of trading it was down 11.14 points on the day, or 0.1 per cent, at 10,897.27.

As is so often the case with the commodity-heavy FTSE 100, miners played their part on the positive side, this time on hopes of further stimulus for China's economy and fears of supply constraints.

Antofagasta, the Chilean-focused miner, closed up 155p, or 4.4 per cent, at £37.04. **Glencore** was not too far behind with a gain of 18¾p, or 3.5 per cent, to 539p, while shares in **Rio Tinto** rose 159p, or 2.3 per cent, to £71.36.

The surprise perhaps on the FTSE 250 is that it ended 82.33 points, or 0.3 per cent, higher at 24,079.14 even though recruiters had another bad day.

There have been signs recently that the recruitment sector was beginning to recover from a years-long slowdown. On yesterday's evidence, investors still need convincing. Shares in **Hays**, the second-biggest faller on the more UK-focused index, were down 4¼p, or 6.7 per cent, at 60¼p and **PageGroup** was 9p, or 4.5 per cent, lower at 187¾p.

Wall Street report

Indices bounced back from their midweek falls after Microsoft's strong results suggested its huge spending on AI is translating into profits. Recent big AI-related fallers led the way, with Sandisk up 26 per cent and Micron Technology up 18.3 per cent. Microsoft stock gained 15.5 per cent. The Nasdaq rose 679.24 points, or 2.8 per cent, to 25,122.18 while the S&P 500 was up 121.48 points, or 1.7 per cent, at 7,437.63. The Dow Jones industrial average was 613.92 points, or 1.2 per cent, higher at 52,208.06.

The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
Rolls-Royce	6.0%
Halma	4.8%
Antofagasta	4.4%
Lion Finance	4.0%
Lloyds Banking Group	3.9%
Sage Group	-5.3%
Experian	-5.8%
London Stock Exchange	-6.4%
Relx	-6.9%
Rentokil Initial	-20.6%

1-800-TERMINIX
TERMINIX

Damage provision at its US acquisition Terminix sent Rentokil down 20 per cent

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Nscale buys AI start-up

Nscale, a data centre company based in London, is buying Anyscale, an artificial intelligence start-up in San Francisco, for a reported $1.65 billion.

The British company's board includes Sheryl Sandberg, former chief operating officer of Meta, and Sir Nick Clegg, who was Meta's president of global affairs. Anyscale provides software to organise and manage complex AI tasks so they can run smoothly across many computers simultaneously.

Nscale, which has attracted attention for its $14.6 billion valuation and its relatively modest scale, said it expected to gain more customers by offering Anyscale's software. Anyscale would continue to operate under its brand and serve its existing customers, the companies said. Its team of about 200 people across the United States, Europe and India will join Nscale as part of the acquisition.

Nscale did not disclose the financial terms of the deal but Bloomberg, which first reported the acquisition, said the price was about $1.65 billion. Nscale's backers include Nvidia, and the UK government has put the start-up, founded in 2024, at the heart of its plans to "mainline AI" into Britain's economy. It says it "designs, builds, owns and operates data centres, GPU [graphics processing unit] infrastructure and AI services for some of the most important technology companies globally".

Bison on the charge

A London-listed marketing company backed by Lord Ashcroft has made a revised offer for a British rival and doubled the cash element. Brave Bison, which trades on the Aim, has issued a formal bid of £43.1 million for Systeml, which would mean investors receiving 2.04 new Brave Bison shares and 135p a share in cash. Under the previous proposal, rejected by Systeml, investors were offered 2.7553 new Brave Bison shares and 68p in cash for each share held. Brave Bison is backed by Ashcroft, the former Conservative Party deputy chairman, as well as News Corp, parent company of The Times. Systeml has yet to respond.

KPMG audit investigated

The accounting watchdog is investigating KPMG's auditing of the engineering consultancy John Wood Group. The Financial Reporting Council will examine the firm's work for the 2023 financial year. Two individual accountants are also part of the inquiry in relation to the preparation of financial statements in Wood's projects business unit and the communication with auditors. The Financial Conduct Authority has already fined Wood £13 million for inaccurate information in its 2022 and 2023 annual results and the interim one from 2024. Wood was bought by Sidara, a rival, in March.

LSEG gives reassurance

London Stock Exchange Group has sought to answer concerns about how artificial intelligence may impact its earnings by signing up hundreds of clients to its data platform. LSEG has been responding with its Model Context Protocol server, which connects technologies such as Anthropic's Claude and Microsoft Copilot. The server allows AI agents to access LSEG's financial data, and it has now engaged with more than 200 customers. The group beat forecasts for earnings before deductions, which rose by 16.7 per cent to £2.5 billion, while profit before tax increased 29 per cent to £1.3 billion.

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	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Strategic Bond Fund ‡	129.5		-0.35	8.14
UK Equity A ‡	395.45		+0.83	3.99
UK Growth ‡	20186.9		+17.71	2.27

ARTEMIS FUND MGRS
0800 092 2051
Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Income Fund R Acc ‡	363.06		-1.65	...
Global Income Fund R Inc ‡	207.38		-0.94	...
Global Select Fund R ‡	224.7		-1.2	...
High Income Fund R Inc ‡	67.55		+0.00	...
Income Fund R Acc ‡	816.81		+2.3	...
Income Fund R Inc ‡	313.07		+0.88	...
Monthly Dist & R Inc ‡	90.24		-0.12	...
SmartGarp Eurp Equity R ‡	874.97		+5.85	...
SmartGarp Global Equity R ‡	659.75		-8.39	...
SmartGarp UK Equity R ‡	4273.75		+22.33	...
Strategic Assets R Acc ‡	95.22		+0.37	...
Strategic Bd R M Acc ‡	115.65		-0.22	...
Strategic Bd R M Inc ‡	52.28		-0.1	...
Strategic Bd R Q Acc ‡	115.45		-0.21	...
Strategic Bd R Q Inc ‡	52.38		-0.1	...
UK Select R Acc ‡	1321.66		+9.15	...
Uk Smaller Cos R Acc ‡	2310.26		-1.65	...
UK Special Sits R Acc ‡	1899.79		+2.53	...

AXA FRAMLINGTON UNIT MGMT
Dling: 0845 602 1952 Priv Clients:0845 777 5511

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Health ‡	3341		-25.00	...
UK Select Opps Inc ‡	2151		+1.00	1.15
UK Sml Cos Inc ‡	320.4		-0.40	0.38
UK Sust Eqty R Dis ‡	237.7		-0.20	1.15

AXA FUND MANAGERS
Admin & Enq 0117 989 0808
UK/Global Investment Companies

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Gwth Acc R ‡	288.1		...	0.52
Japan Acc A ‡	162.3		...	1.51

CIS UNIT MANAGERS
08457 46 46 46

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Growth ‡	291.00		...	1.14
Sus Leaders §@	1023		-0.60	1.48
UK Growth ‡	890.70		...	1.71
UK Income §@	260.80		...	3.92

CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT
Dealing 020 7426 6232

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Winchester ‡	5513.68		+38.02	0.62

COLUMBIA THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Enqs:0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 6083
Share Class 1-Retail

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Gwth & Inc ‡	1560		+7	0.18
FTSE All Shr Track ‡	598.1		+1.4	2.79
Global Gwth SCI ‡	386.4		-6.2	...
Strategic Bd ‡	227.2		-0.3	0.78

EDENTREE INV MGMT
0800 358 3010

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Sust Eur Eqty A Dis ‡	490.9		+3.50	1.77
Sust Gbl Eqty A Dis §@	444.1		-5.70	0.55
Sust Mgd Income §@	141.8		+0.30	4.72
Sust Sterling Bond A Dis ‡	84.7		-0.20	4.98
Sust UK Eqty A Dis §@	255.1		-1.00	1.63
Sust UK Eqty Opps A Dis §@	325.6		-0.20	1.42

FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL
Private Clnts:0800 414161 Broker Dlgs:0800 414181

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Spec ‡	2882		...	...
American ‡	7614		...	...
Euro Opps ‡	721.7		...	0.50
European ‡	4301		...	0.79
Global Focus ‡	3531		...	...
Global High Income Bond A Dis ‡	22.36		...	6.59
Global Special Sits ‡	8557		...	...
Japan ‡	421.1		...	0.36
Moneybilder Bal ‡	49.07		...	0.60
Moneybilder Inc ‡	28.16		...	5.31
Moneybilder UK Ind ‡	202.25		...	2.48
Special Sits ‡	7414		...	1.67
UK Opportunities Fund A Dis ‡	105.7		...	1.43

HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS
01296 386 386
Authorised Inv Funds
Share Class C

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bond ‡	37.15		...	4.50
Intl Gwth ‡	209.1		...	0.60
UK FTSE 100 IT ‡	103.7		...	...
UK FTSE All-S IT ‡	120.4		...	...

HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK)
Enq:0845 745 6123 Dlg:0845 745 6126 Mon-Frid:8-6
HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Ind Acc ‡	1561		-36	0.81
Euro Ind Acc ‡	1827		+7	2.33
Euro Ind Inc ‡	1058		+3	2.38
FTSE 100 Ind Acc ‡	446.2		+3.1	2.49
FTSE 100 Ind Inc ‡	180.7		+1.2	2.63
FTSE 250 Ind Acc ‡	399.8		-0.7	2.94
FTSE 250 Ind Inc ‡	216.8		-0.4	2.93
FTSE All-S Acc ‡	1112		+3	2.65
FTSE FTSE All-S Inc ‡	500.1		+1.1	2.79
Japan Ind Acc ‡	222.5		-2.6	1.52
Japan Ind Inc ‡	161.4		-1.8	1.56
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	963.5		-6.1	1.72
Pacific Ind Inc ‡	545.1		-3.5	1.75

HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) Retail Share Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd Acc §@	310.2		-0.9	4.38
Income Acc ‡	1862		...	3.28
Income Inc §@	401.7		+0.2	3.32
Monthly Inc Acc §@	313.4		...	3.75
Monthly Inc Inc §@	155.9		...	4.02
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc §@	224.5		...	2.99
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inv §@	87.02		+0.01	3.06

HSBC Specialist Investment Fds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Index Retail Inc ‡	1203		-27	0.79

INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD
Dling:0800 085 8571 Inv Serv:0800 085 8677
Brkr Serv:0800 028 2121
Invesco Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond ‡	230.29		...	4.04
High Income Dis ‡	433.23		...	3.15
Income & Growth Dis ‡	511.88		...	3.06
Income Inc ‡	1665.98		...	2.87
Money Acc ‡	107.7		...	3.62
Monthly Inc Plus Dis ‡	92.46		...	5.78
UK Opps UK Acc ‡	1397.04		...	1.47
UK Sml Cos Eqty Acc ‡	1333.79		...	1.45

INVESTEC FUND MGRS LTD
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OEIC Series I, II,III & Iv

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American A Acc ‡	836.02		-3.9	...
Cautious Managed A Acc ‡	468.62		-0.95	2.63
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	268.42		-0.53	2.49
Diversified Growth A Acc ‡	321.93		-2.09	0.21
Diversified Growth Inc ‡	118.43		-0.77	0.98
Diversified Income A Acc ‡	374.89		-0.36	3.88
Diversified Income A Inc ‡	67.84		-0.07	5.28
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Ac ‡	140.38		-0.82	6.81
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ‡	66.4		-0.38	7.72
Emerging Mkts Equity A Acc ‡	274.84		-2.29	0.85
Emerging Mkts Leaders A Acc ‡	1159.77		-4.84	...
Global Equity A Acc ‡	300.35		+0.51	...
Global Franchise A Acc ‡	402.62		+0.73	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ‡	2947.5		-21.09	...
Global Gold A Acc ‡	468.98		-7.92	...
Global Special Situations A Acc ‡	522.33		-1.15	...
Global Special Situations A Inc ‡	400.6		-0.89	...
UK Special Situations A Acc ‡	2728.86		+16.53	1.03
UK Special Situations A Inc ‡	937.45		+5.69	1.04

For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEIC)

JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS
Investor Serv: 0800 832 831 Dlng:0845 946 4646

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
All Stcks Credit A Inc ‡	112.9		...	4.40
Asian Div Inc U Trust Inc ‡	96.48		...	5.40
Cautious Managed Fd A Acc ‡	357		...	3.80
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	154.6		...	3.90
China Opp Fund A Acc ‡	1314		...	0.10
Emg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ‡	277.4		...	...
Erpn Sel Opps Fd A Acc ‡	3182		...	0.20
Fix Int Mnthly Inc Fd Acc ‡	33.01		...	6.10
Global Equity Fund Acc ‡	6212		...	...
Global Equity Income A Ac ‡	36.1		...	2.40
Global Tech A Acc ‡	6418		...	...
Intl UK Idx Opps A Acc ‡	179.1621		...	2.20
M-Asset Abs Rtn A Acc ‡	186.4		...	2.70
M-Man Active Fd A Acc ‡	329.3		-0.4	1.70
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ‡	159.6		...	2.70
M-Man Inc Fd Grth A Acc ‡	228.7		...	2.70
Sterling Bond U Trst Acc ‡	228.3		...	4.40
Sterling Bond U Trst Inc ‡	55.13		...	4.40
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡	95.11		...	5.80
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ‡	207		...	2.10
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ‡	197.5		...	1.30
US Growth Fund A Acc ‡	2796		...	...

J.P. MORGAN ASSET MANAGEMENT
OEIC

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Equity Core E Net Acc ‡@	711.7080		+1.7000	2.49

JUPITER UT TRUST MANAGERS LTD
020 7581 3020

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Distribution & Growth ‡	122.79		-0.4371	2.93
Euro Special Sits ‡	583.2		+0.5222	0.71
European ‡	3880.26		+0.5284	0.61
Financial Opps ‡	1298.38		-0.7777	1.01
Global Macro Bd L GBP ACC ‡	426		-1.6450	3.39
Merlin Bal Acc ‡	338.38		-0.8237	2.26
Merlin Growth Acc ‡	813.26		-0.9037	0.20
Merlin Inc Acc §@	463.24		-0.5523	3.47
Merlin Wwide Inc ‡	592.34		-1.7043	...
UK Dynamic Equity L Dis ‡	292.53		+0.3401	1.75
UK Growth ‡	287.23		-0.0357	0.64
UK Income Trust ‡	1017.31		-0.1034	4.58

LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MANGRS) LTD
Enquiries: 0870 050 0955 Dealing: 0870 050 0956

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Ind Acc ‡	799.5000		+320.0000	200.00
Euro Ind Inc ‡	487.4000		+200.0000	200.00
Fixed Int Acc §@	149.4000		-30.0000	460.00
Fixed Int Dist §@	61.7400		-13.0000	460.00
Global Health ‡	122.3000		-390.0000	90.00
Glob Tech Acc ‡	223.3000		+180.0000	...
High Inc Acc §@	153.0000		-20.0000	580.00
Japan Ind Acc ‡	187.0000		-90.0000	130.00
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	378.4000		-440.0000	150.00
UK Index Trust Acc ‡	539.7000		+120.0000	250.00
Uk Index Trust Dist ‡	233.7000		+50.0000	250.00
US Ind Acc §@	1374.0000		-1200.0000	50.00
Worldwide Acc ‡	462.8000		-130.0000	90.00

M&G SECURITIES
Enq:0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196
Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Charifund Inc ‡	1921.49		+0.247293959	5.00

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Extra Income Inc ‡	832.78		...	5.06
Gilt & Fxd Int Inc ‡	66.74		...	4.41
Gl Hi Yld Bd Inc ‡	39.73		...	6.26
Index Linked Bd Inc ‡	100.42		...	1.58
Index Trckr Inc ‡	104.86		+0.24865965	3.00
Short Dated Corp Bd Inc ‡	25.20		...	4.27
UK Select A Inc ‡	3290.33		...	2.66

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 3

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd A Inc ‡	32.62		...	5.05
Dividend Inc ‡	67.06		...	5.33
Recovery A Inc ‡	140.74		...	2.88
Sml Cos Inc ‡	357.04		...	2.87

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 4

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Episode Allocation A Inc ‡	160.92		...	3.94

MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST
0808 005 5555

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
High Income ‡	88.07		...	4.60
High Income Acc ‡	296.1		...	4.60
UK 100 Comp Acc ‡	720.1		...	3.10
UK 100 Comp Inc ‡	323.9		...	3.10
UK Select Port ‡	480.8		...	2.90
UK Select Port Acc ‡	1099.9		...	2.90
W'wide Mgd Acc §@	1315		...	0.80
Worldwide Mgd Acc §@	731.7		...	0.80

MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT
Enquiries: 0800 0961 962
The Morgan Stanley Funds (UK)
Class A Shares
Equity

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Glob Bal Inc F F Acc ‡	1049.40		...	1.54
Glob Bal Inc F F Inc ‡	938.65		...	1.55
Glob Bal Inc F I Inc ‡	936.69		...	1.49
Glob Bal Inc F I Acc ‡	1046.53		...	1.47
Glob Bal Sust F F Acc ‡	1036.68		...	1.65
Glob Bal Sust F F Inc ‡	989.88		...	1.66
Glob Bal Sust F I Acc ‡	1034.12		...	1.57
Glob Bal Sust F I Inc ‡	989.45		...	1.60
Glob Br Eq Fund F Inc ‡	1097.42		...	4.35
Glob Br Eq Fund I Acc ‡	1728.93		...	4.31
Glob Br Eq Fund I Inc ‡	1160.29		...	4.43
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	14034.25		...	0.33
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	1613.56		...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1719.91		...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	3774.76		...	0.33
Glob Quality Fund F Acc (PH) ‡	1502.55		...	0.49
Glob Quality Fund F Inc ‡	1473.29		...	0.51
Glob Quality Fund I Acc ‡	1514.13		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1497.38		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund F Acc ‡	1538.03		...	0.51
Stg Corp Bond F F Acc ‡	143.72		...	4.78
Stg Corp Bond F F Inc ‡	97.87		...	4.80
Stg Corp Bond F I Inc ‡	1372.61		...	4.73
Stg Corp Bond F I Acc ‡	3040.71		...	4.63
US Adv F F Acc ‡	3404.78		...	...
US Adv F F Acc (PH) ‡	3434.13		...	...
US Adv F I Acc ‡	2532.24		...	...
US Adv F I Acc (PH) ‡	3484.97		...	...

SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS
08457 413002

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Inc Inc ‡	242.9		...	...
Stkmkt 100 Tkr ‡	230.8000		...	...
UK Growth I Acc ‡	653.1		...	...
UK Growth Inc ‡	313.6		...	...

SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MNGRES LTD
0141 248 6100

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Far Eastern Inc	617.0700	649.4700	...	...
Mutual Far Eastern	1276.4800	1347.2100	-6.11	0.39
Mutual UK Eq	1429.4900	1508.7800	...	7.81
UK Equity Inc	562.2300	593.3800	...	7.81

SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRUST MNGRS
0845 300 2244
Overseas Growth Investment Funds
Tracker & Special Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr A Acc ‡	604.3		+1.50	2.50
UK Trkr A Inc ‡	275.0		+0.70	2.50

UK & Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond A Acc §@	327.1		-1.30	4.00
Corp Bond A Inc §@	107.7		-0.40	4.00
Envir Invtr A Acc ‡	470.8		-0.40	2.10
Hi Inc Bond A Acc §@	296.0		...	6.40
Hi Inc Bond A Inc §@	70.10		-0.01	6.40
Hi Res A Acc §@	560.3		+0.40	3.70
Hi Res A Inc §@	151.6		+0.10	3.80
Strat In A Acc §@	227.4		-0.80	4.50
Strat In A Inc §@	86.00		-0.31	4.50
UK Eq Trckr A ‡	135.7		+0.30	2.50

OEIC B Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr B Acc ‡	669.5		+1.70	2.60
UK Trkr B Inc ‡	273.5		+0.70	2.60

OEIC C Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Eq Tkr C ‡	132.5		+0.20	2.60

STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS
0845 279 3003
Investment Funds (OEIC)-Retail Shares

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AAA Inc CAT Acc ‡	98.09		...	2.52
AAA Inc CAT Inc ‡	50.91		...	2.52
AAA Income Acc ‡	108.20		...	...
Amer Eq Gth Acc ‡	283.50		...	...
Glb Advtg CAT Acc ‡	197.1		...	1.32
Glob Advtg Acc ‡	259.80		...	...
Higher Inc Acc ‡	184.70		...	...
Higher Inc Inc ‡	47.80		...	...
Managed Acc ‡	533.4		...	1.83
UK Ethical Acc ‡	256.60		...	...
UK Smlr Cos Acc ‡	801.10		...	...

SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS
Enquiries:0141 222 1151

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced A Acc ‡	181.41		...	2.02
Blanced A Inc ‡	153.54		...	2.07
Cautious A Acc ‡	131.41		...	2.44
Cautious A Inc ‡	103.96		...	2.48
Dynamic A Acc ‡	480.42		...	1.40
Dynamic A Inc ‡	420.33		...	1.41
Growth A Acc ‡	476.17		...	1.63
Income A Acc ‡	312.48		...	2.17

THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Client Serv: 0800 0684000
Retail Shares Class 1

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle HY Bd Rtl Inc ‡	39.381		-2.53	4.66
Threadneedle Mnthly Ext Inc Inc ‡	131.633		-2.15	2.74
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Bd Inc ‡	54.5689		-17.52	4.31
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Acc ‡	54.4728		-17.54	3.98
Threadneedle Stg Bd Ret Inc ‡	39.3684		-19.77	4.19
Threadneedle Strat Bd Ret ‡	41.7532		-2.42	3.83
Threadneedle UK Eq Inc Rtl Inc ‡	126.2825		-38.39	3.49
Threadneedle UK Gwth & Inc Rtl Inc ‡	113.986		-57.52	3.18
Threadneedle UK Istl Rtl ‡	249.6227		+10.75	1.34
Threadneedle UK Mnthly Inc Rtl Inc ‡	69.7174		+3.09	3.01
Threadneedle UK Rtl Inc ‡	167.2696		-23.12	1.33
Threadneedle UK Smaller Coms Rtl Inc ‡	396.1491		-85.59	0.39

For Resolution see Ignis

TU FUND MANAGERS LTD

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
IFSL Marlborough Eur A Dis	1004	1004	...	1.22

* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); † Ex dividend; ‡Middle price; ... No significant data; § Periodic charge deducted from capital; @ Exit charge

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British funds

Index-Linked

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/-	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
73.08	63.68	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 50	63.41	- .40	0.79	2.58
66.33	57.06	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 52	56.62	- .34	0.44	2.57
101.91	97.20	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 28	99.30	+ .10	0.13	0.47
100.99	97.18	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 29	98.17	+ .10	0.13	0.82
98.49	94.73	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 31	95.33	+ .04	0.13	1.08
88.33	82.97	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 36	83.08	- .07	0.15	1.94
82.85	76.16	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 39	76.89	- .17	0.16	2.23
79.32	72.11	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 41	72.24	- .20	0.17	2.32
74.05	65.19	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 44	66.41	- .22	0.19	2.49
71.23	62.87	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 46	62.78	- .35	0.20	2.54
68.00	59.19	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 48	59.09	- .40	0.21	2.57
60.61	50.09	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 56	49.73	- .45	0.25	2.50
58.90	48.59	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 58	48.64	- .36	0.26	2.48
54.25	43.57	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 65	43.25	- .41	0.29	2.34
53.89	40.40	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 68	42.11	- .39	0.30	2.29
57.66	42.98	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 73	43.24	- .41	0.29	2.00
97.88	93.42	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 34	93.47	- .03	0.80	1.66
79.12	71.03	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 47	70.68	- .40	1.06	2.54
62.70	49.79	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 62	51.33	- .32	0.73	2.42
87.38	80.77	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 40	80.60	- .18	0.78	2.29
84.28	76.46	Tr IL 0 [illegible]% 42	76.25	- .27	0.82	2.39
104.36	100.95	Tr IL 1 [illegible]% 27	101.13	+ .06	1.24	0.38
103.67	99.28	Tr IL 1 [illegible]% 32	99.36	+ nc	1.26	1.36
86.56	72.33	Tr IL 1 [illegible]% 54	73.90	- .46	1.69	2.55
85.60	73.36	Tr IL 1 [illegible]% 55	73.42	- .48	1.70	2.54
99.52	94.19	Tr IL 1 [illegible]% 35	94.17	- .04	1.19	1.82
97.09	90.76	Tr IL 1 [illegible]% 37	90.72	- .10	1.24	2.05
102.53	95.86	Tr IL 1 [illegible]% 38	99.99	- .10	1.82	2.13
99.42	88.49	Tr IL 1 [illegible]% 49	88.41	- .46	2.12	2.54
248.27	236.46	Tr IL 2% 35	239.72	- .07	0.83	1.79
349.35	338.41	Tr IL 4 [illegible]% 30	340.74	+ .51	1.21	0.95

Longs (Over 15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/-	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
26.99	22.31	Tr 0 [illegible]% 61	22.78	- .09	2.19	5.46
65.04	55.40	Tr 0 [illegible]% 51	55.52	- .40	0.23	2.57
38.39	32.78	Tr 0 [illegible]% 50	33.57	- .34	1.86	5.73
47.60	40.99	Tr 1 [illegible]% 53	41.82	- .11	3.59	5.78
45.88	39.62	Tr 1 [illegible]% 51	40.48	- .15	3.09	5.78
33.04	27.53	Tr 1 [illegible]% 73	27.97	- .07	4.02	5.29
48.44	41.88	Tr 1 [illegible]% 57	42.59	- .15	4.11	5.73
48.36	41.73	Tr 1 [illegible]% 54	42.65	- .15	3.81	5.76
41.45	35.65	Tr 1 [illegible]% 71	36.22	- .10	4.49	5.42
57.14	49.76	Tr 2 [illegible]% 65	50.62	- .19	4.94	5.65
74.02	64.55	Tr 3 [illegible]% 68	65.80	- .21	5.32	5.63
81.50	72.00	Tr 3 [illegible]% 52	73.38	- .18	5.11	5.73
80.90	71.30	Tr 3 [illegible]% 53	72.52	- .18	5.17	5.76
88.15	77.58	Tr 4 [illegible]% 55	79.00	- .21	5.38	5.74
83.52	73.44	Tr 4% 60	74.62	- .26	5.36	5.71

Mediums (5-15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/-	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
83.19	79.47	Tr 0 [illegible]% 31	81.27	+ .24	0.31	4.47
86.27	82.79	Tr 0 [illegible]% 30	84.52	+ .23	0.44	4.43
72.25	67.14	Tr 0 [illegible]% 35	68.73	+ .12	0.91	4.98
79.97	75.46	Tr 0 [illegible]% 33	76.96	+ .19	1.14	4.79
48.97	42.75	Tr 0 [illegible]% 46	43.84	- .08	2.00	5.67
54.44	47.82	Tr 1 [illegible]% 47	48.86	- .11	3.07	5.72
61.88	55.59	Tr 1 [illegible]% 41	57.06	- .01	2.19	5.43
66.75	60.85	Tr 1 [illegible]% 39	62.41	+ .04	1.80	5.27
75.83	69.99	Tr 1 [illegible]% 37	71.39	+ .08	2.45	5.17
55.77	49.19	Tr 1 [illegible]% 49	50.09	- .10	3.49	5.73
85.07	81.01	Tr 1% 32	82.56	+ .17	1.21	4.63
82.54	74.42	Tr 3 [illegible]% 45	75.72	- .08	4.62	5.63
95.49	90.74	Tr 3 [illegible]% 33	91.83	+ .19	3.54	4.72
80.41	72.57	Tr 3 [illegible]% 44	73.94	- .05	4.40	5.61
100.00	85.76	Tr 3 [illegible]% 36	87.51	+ .08	4.30	5.23
102.40	96.34	Tr 4 [illegible]% 34	97.58	+ .17	4.61	4.86
101.93	0.01	Tr 4 [illegible]% 35	96.90	+ .16	4.64	4.95
96.45	87.54	Tr 4 [illegible]% 42	89.13	- .05	5.05	5.52
102.53	97.08	Tr 4 [illegible]% 32	98.15	+ .19	4.33	4.61
100.56	94.70	Tr 4 [illegible]% 34	95.90	+ .17	4.43	4.80
99.39	92.65	Tr 4 [illegible]% 36	94.06	+ .14	4.52	5.04
100.00	88.42	Tr 4 [illegible]% 39	89.99	+ .05	4.72	5.32
100.00	86.92	Tr 4 [illegible]% 40	88.65	+ .03	4.79	5.40
90.97	81.54	Tr 4 [illegible]% 46	83.11	- .11	5.11	5.66
89.58	79.95	Tr 4 [illegible]% 49	81.41	- .15	5.22	5.70
101.49	97.47	Tr 4 [illegible]% 31	98.25	+ .22	4.20	4.55
100.70	95.57	Tr 4 [illegible]% 33	96.58	+ .20	4.27	4.73
104.72	100.54	Tr 4 [illegible]% 30	101.17	+ .25	4.70	4.45
103.33	96.78	Tr 4 [illegible]% 35	98.10	+ .15	4.84	5.01
102.00	93.84	Tr 4 [illegible]% 38	95.41	+ .09	4.98	5.26
102.58	98.98	Tr 4 [illegible]% 30	99.61	+ .20	4.39	4.49
97.07	89.07	Tr 4 [illegible]% 40	90.60	+ .03	4.83	5.36
100.00	94.52	Tr 4 [illegible]% 37	95.83	+ .14	4.83	5.14
100.99	96.96	Tr 4 [illegible]% 36	98.38	+ .14	4.96	5.08
106.68	96.52	Tr 5 [illegible]% 41	98.35	+ .02	5.34	5.42
109.44	93.20	Tr 5 [illegible]% 56	94.83	- .23	5.67	5.74

Shorts (Under 5 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/-	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
91.87	89.09	Tr 0 [illegible]% 29	91.02	+ .17	0.55	4.33
98.67	91.49	Tr 0 [illegible]% 28	94.25	+ .12	0.13	4.12
99.37	96.11	Tr 0 [illegible]% 26	99.27	+ .02	0.38	3.62
91.00	87.88	Tr 0 [illegible]% 29	89.49	+ .21	0.98	4.40
97.29	95.29	Tr 1 [illegible]% 27	97.23	+ .07	1.29	4.21
95.46	92.89	Tr 1 [illegible]% 28	94.35	+ .16	1.72	4.31
101.17	98.03	Tr 4% 29	98.80	+ .20	4.05	4.46
101.41	99.44	Tr 4 [illegible]% 27	100.01	+ .09	4.25	4.24
101.88	98.28	Tr 4 [illegible]% 29	99.09	+ .20	4.16	4.45
100.70	99.60	Tr 4 [illegible]% 27	100.03	+ .03	4.12	4.04
101.65	99.40	Tr 4 [illegible]% 28	100.03	+ .12	4.37	4.36
107.53	103.38	Tr 6% 28	103.82	+ .16	5.78	4.27

* maturities having an eight-month indexation lag.

This is a paid for information service. For further details on a particular fund, readers should contact their fund manager.

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EQUITY PRICES

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by ICE Data Services. The yield is the sum of a company's annual 12-month dividend payments divided by the last day's closing share price.
12-month high and low High/low prices for UK equities and investment trusts are based on intra-day figures.

Automobiles & Part

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
86½	34½	Aston Martin Lag	36	+ ½	...	-0.7

Banking & Finance

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
265	177½	**Aberdeen Group**	239½	+ 1½	6.1	11.1
1½	0½	Acuity RM♦	0½		...	-3.4
3816	2624	**Admiral**	3780	- 18	5.4	15.3
662½	414½	AJ Bell	599	+ 6½	2.5	23.3
28795½	22372½	AON Corp	26684½	-1231½	0.9	...
1130	799	Arbuthnot♦	840	+ 10	6.5	7.7
276½	145½	Ashmore Group	207	+ 2	8.2	17.0
2126½	1499½	Australia & NZ	1956½	- 9½	5.8	19.3
700½	590½	**Aviva**	695½	+ 9½	5.6	25.9
1080	613	Banco Santander	1054	+ 28	1.6	13.5
554½	352½	**Barclays**	510½	+ 18½	2.3	11.7
17½	4	Blue Star Capital♦	4½		...	-2.3
710	613	BP Marsh & Ptnrs♦	676	- 2	5.4	5.1
363½	212	Bridgepoint Grp	325½	+ 5	3.0	63.2
346	259½	Chesnara	344½	+ 4	6.5	-68.2
489	346	City of London Grp	488	+ 3	6.8	16.3
563½	318½	Close Bros	421½	+ 3½	...	-6.3
753	203	CMC Markets	700	- 1	2.0	25.5
2957½	2057	Deutsche Bank	2730½	+ 75½	3.1	10.1
93	74½	EFG-Hermes Hldgs	74½	- ½	0.9	...
240½	136	EPE Special Opps♦	211	- 4	...	8.7
85	52	Fiske♦	67½		1.7	5.9
92	80	Foresight Ventures VCT	83		4.3	15.5
4572½	2095	Georgia Capital	4010	+ 65	...	2.5
57	43½	Hansard Global	53	- 1	8.4	40.8
230	194	Helios U/W♦	223		4.5	7.7
1904	1246	**Hiscox**	1818	- 2	2.1	13.5
1595½	908½	**HSBC**	1387	+ 39½	3.5	17.6
1956	1016	**IG Group**	1706	+ 17	3.6	11.8
208½	90½	Impax Asset Mgmt♦	111	+ 1½	9.0	7.0
2340	1424½	**ICG**	1899	- 9	4.6	11.4
257½	195	Intl Personal Fin	250	+ 1	...	10.1
143½	115½	Intl Public P'shp	142½	+ ½	6.2	-32.1
690	499½	**Investec**	646	+ 17	6.0	8.4
76	60	Investment Co	75		...	...
72	48	IP Group	62½	- 1½	2.0	8.6
27	6½	Jarvis Securities♦	8		43.8	2.5
214½	113½	Jupiter Fund Mgmt	160½	+ 1½	3.7	8.3
700	549	Lancashire Hldgs	609½	- 7	2.7	6.8
310	217½	**Legal & General**	300	+ 4	7.3	30.0
12040	6905	**Lion Finance Group**	11594	+ 450	3.2	8.1
305	223	Liontrust Asset Mgmt	284	+ 3½	6.7	18.4
61	35	Livermore Invs Grp♦	36½		8.6	16.4
116½	74½	**Lloyds Banking**	115½	+ 4½	3.5	16.5
22	14	LMS Capital	15½		25.7	...
11290	6684	London Stock Exchange	6698	- 592	1.8	36.1
399½	247	**M&G**	356	+ 3½	5.8	28.3
327½	154½	Man Group	313½	+ 3½	4.1	27.3
39½	20	Mano Financial Grp♦	24½		2.1	4.5
10	1½	Marechale Capital♦	4½	+ ½	...	-14.8
185½	98½	Metro Bank	177	+ 3½	...	22.7
2621½	1864½	National Australia	2167½	+ 29½	4.1	18.8
795½	500½	**NatWest Group**	683½	+ 18½	4.8	12.8
842½	438½	PayPoint	608½	- 3	6.5	10.3
1238	910½	**Prudential**	1135	+ 38½	1.7	9.9
1½	0½	Quantum Blockchain♦	0½		...	-1.9
209	150½	Quilter	195½	+ 2	3.2	22.0
2500	1580	Rathbones Group	1656	- 8	6.0	15.3
325	245	Rockwood Strategic	319½	+ 2½	...	0.0
2458½	1620	S & U	1940		5.9	9.9
3	0½	Sancus Lending♦	1½		...	7.2
59½	43½	Schroder REIT	45½	+ ½	7.8	...
599½	358½	**Schroders**	588½		3.7	17.3
1575½	1038½	**St James's Place**	1060	- 4	1.7	10.6
2278	1289	**Standard Chart'd**	2216	+ 59	2.3	15.2
932	615	**Standard Life**	921½	+ 16½	6.0	-186.6
6347½	4186	Sun Life Canada	6181	+ ½	3.3	...
6½	2½	Tavistock Invs♦	3½		3.2	2.6
5200	3615	TBC Bank Grp	4800	+ 172	5.4	6.7
1½	0½	Tern♦	1½		...	-1.8
60	40½	Time Finance♦	50½	+ ½	...	8.0
9½	0½	Tooru♦	0½		...	-1.6
4	1½	Truelide♦	3		...	-5.4
132	82	Vanquis Banking Gp	85½	- 29½	...	26.7
2800	2000	Volvere♦	2100		...	11.1
7239½	5453½	Wells Fargo	6341½	+ 38	2.3	...
2275½	1604½	Westpac Bkg Corp	1990½	+ 13½	4.0	19.0
31½	23	Worsley Investors	28½		...	...
57958	49947½	Zurich Insurance	56689½	+ 71	4.9	19.2

Construction & Property

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
388	181	Alumasc♦	235		4.7	9.1
6½	4½	Assura Properties	4½		...	1.2
2½	1½	Built Cybernetics♦	1½		...	-150.0
908	535½	Balfour Beatty	874	+ 26	1.6	16.6
418½	235½	**Barratt Redrow**	295½	+ 1½	5.8	21.7
2899	1715	Bellway	2016	+ 23	3.6	15.2
4442	2796	Berkeley	3528	+ 58	...	10.6
1288	800½	Big Yellow Grp	886½	- 11	5.3	...
460	233	Billington Hldgs♦	412½	- 19	2.7	39.7
237	133½	Boot (Henry)	152		5.2	8.6
383½	271½	Breedon	327½	+ 12	4.7	13.5
445½	318½	**British Land**	443½	+ 4	5.2	...
2900	2500	Cardiff Property	2750		1.1	20.7
2122	1469½	Derwent London	2116	+ 14	3.9	...
5½	4½	DCI Advisors♦	4½		...	-2.7
18½	11	First Property♦	11½	+ ½	2.1	6.5
75	29	Fletcher King♦	37½		6.0	25.3
62	31½	Foxtons Group	39½	- ½	3.0	9.2
632	407½	Galliford Try Hldgs	600		3.3	17.8
481½	241	Genuit Group	274½	+ 9½	4.7	15.1
435	221	Gleeson (MJ)	277	+ 3½	4.0	10.2
1009½	788½	Grafton Grp Units	969½	+ 1½	3.9	13.8
213	149½	Grainger	175½	+ 1½	4.8	6.4
377	270	Great Portland Est	353½	+ 4½	2.3	0.0
377	263½	Hammerson	368½	- ½	4.9	0.0
191	116½	Harworth Group	130½	+ 1½	1.4	45.0
408	225	Heath (Samuel)♦	255		5.1	31.9
247½	180½	Helical	200		1.3	41.4
159½	87½	Ibstock	94	+ ½	3.2	...
161½	112	James Halstead♦	121	+ ½	7.4	12.5
3518	1238	Keller	3068	+ 68	2.3	15.1
6750½	6532½	Kingspan Group	6695½		0.7	21.1
721	522½	**Land Securities**	721	+ 11½	5.7	...
216½	175½	**LondonMetric Prop**	198	+ ½	6.3	...
25½	4½	Macau Prop Opp Fd	6½		...	-0.3
212½	124	Marshalls	160½	+ 4½	4.2	28.1
113	66	Michelmersh Brick♦	78½		5.9	19.5
1½	0½	Mindflair♦	0½		...	-1.3
5730	3915	Morgan Sindall	4460	+ 94	3.7	12.0
10000	8405	Mountview Estates	8750		6.0	16.8
84	65½	NewRiver REIT	82½	+ ½	8.1	...
234	160	Palace Capital	175	- ½	8.6	38.9
320	261	Panther Securities♦	296		4.1	12.1
1552	947½	**Persimmon**	1111	+ 8½	5.4	12.4
24	15	Plaza Centers	14½		...	-0.1
109½	87½	Primary Health Props	96½	- ½	7.6	...
33½	28	Real Estate Inv♦	31½		4.8	-62.4
849½	578½	Safestore	615½	- 2½	5.0	...
1126	791½	Savills	938	+ 3	3.6	18.0
5½	0½	Secure Prop Dev & Inv♦	6½		...	-0.1
997½	603	**Segro**	966½	- 3½	3.3	...
162½	124½	Shaftesbury Capital	148	+ 2½	2.9	7.8
19½	6½	SIG	8½	+ ½	...	-1.5
153	105	SigmaRoc♦	123½	+ 4½	...	17.0
113	85½	Sirius Real Estate	99½		5.5	7.7
140	106	Smart (J)	112½		2.9	8.6
23½	15½	Steppe Cement♦	22		...	19.6
116½	74½	Taylor Wimpey	83	+ ½	9.2	29.7
140	104	Town Centre	131	- 1	3.8	...
723½	493½	Travis Perkins	560½	- 9	2.1	-6.7
175	132½	**Tritax Big Box**	171	+ ½	4.8	...
766	442½	Unite Group	546	+ 13	6.9	...
746½	228	Vistry Group	295	+ ½	...	7.0
434½	312	Workspace Group	347½	- 5½	7.5	...
920	730	Wynnstay Props♦	865		3.3	12.0

Consumer Goods

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
229	88½	AEP Plantations	171	- 3	3.6	9.9
30	17½	Airea♦	27½		3.6	10.8
340	216	Animalcare♦	335		0.7	45.9
2359	1729½	**AB Foods**	2091	- 9	3.0	14.8
715½	598	Barr (AG)	656		2.9	15.5
5326	3677	**British Amer Tob**	4566	- 174	5.4	13.0
1376½	976	**Burberry Group**	1194	+ 1	...	...
183½	85½	C&C Group	183½	- 1½	4.7	...
5½	2½	Capital Metals♦	4½		...	-37.3
460	271	Churchill China♦	398		5.4	9.8
5395	3270	**Coca-Cola HBC**	5068	- 5	2.0	22.8
1580	880½	Colefax♦	1445	+ 30	0.4	13.3
5830	4775	Cranswick	5430		2.1	18.4
2342	1295½	**Diageo**	1643½	- 24½	3.8	20.8
0½	0	Distil♦	0		...	-0.6
1938	1160	Evans (M.P.)♦	1638	- 16	3.7	10.0
158	114½	Fevera	132	- ½	1.8	5.7
23540	14070	**Games Workshop**	19420	- 430	1.0	31.1
2385½	1828½	Glanbia	2013½	+ 34½	1.8	37.0
387½	191½	Greencore	259½	+ 2½	1.0	19.7
84	4½	Headlam	5½	- ½	...	-0.1
861	447½	Hilton Food	568	+ 3	6.2	6.5
3632	2626	**Imperial Brands**	2842	- 87	5.9	11.3
7646½	5567½	Kerry Group	7384½	+ 207½	1.7	21.5
170	106½	McBride	163½	+ 3½	1.8	8.3
165	85	Mulberry Group♦	155	+ 5	...	-11.9
1430	890	Nichols♦	1040	- 10	3.7	17.7
374	252	Norcros	317		3.6	...
372	309	Origin Ents♦	366		4.0	8.6
1	0½	PACSCo♦	0½		...	-0.0
138	47½	Portmeirion♦	48		...	-1.1
1½	0½	Proteosis♦	1½		...	-57.0
113½	65½	PZ Cussons	111½	+ 1	3.2	-81.0
138	87	REA	109		...	-200.1
217½	155	Tandem♦	175		1.7	11.3
330	220	The Character Grp♦	304	+ 2	2.3	-45.1
10	5	Ukrproduct Grp♦	6	- ½	...	-14.0
5542½	3644	**Unilever**	4850	- 136	3.3	11.1
111	39½	Victoria♦	66½	- 4½	...	-8.2

Engineering

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
59½	30	Assoc Brit Eng	20		...	-4.9
2230	1458	Avon Technologies	1734	- 38	1.3	46.7
1527	902½	**Babcock**	1129½	+ 14½	0.7	26.7
2360	1529	**BAE Systems**	2050	+ 30	1.8	29.8
1500	580	Braime A N/V♦	1250		1.3	6.6
2285	1376	Braime Group♦	2250	+ 100	0.7	11.9
550	350	Caffyns	400		2.5	-9.0
0½	0½	Cap XX Ltd♦	0½		...	-4.9
340	282½	Castings	306	- 16	6.0	17.6
27	12½	Checkit♦	19		...	-7.3
620	446½	Chemring Group	586½	- 10	1.4	32.9
55	28½	Chesterfield Spec Cyl♦	34		...	-37.0
1538	881½	Cohort♦	1234	- 8	1.3	23.6
510	171	Dialight	478	- 3	...	...
15	5½	Feedback♦	6		...	-0.2
1270	463½	Gooch & Housego♦	1220		1.1	89.1
28500	7720	Goodwin	16960	+ 620	1.7	51.8
4902	3391½	**Halma**	3574	+ 164	0.7	36.3
3145	1951½	Hill & Smith	2880	+ 25	1.8	28.0
2½	1	Image Scan♦	2½		...	-10.0
3076	2138	**IMI**	2946	+ 86	1.2	23.7
7000	3480	Judges Sci♦	4630	- 45	2.5	56.0
90	34	LPA♦	82½		...	-31.2
685	443½	**Melrose**	475½	- 5½	1.5	16.4
251½	167	Morgan Advanced	226	+ 8½	5.4	38.1
405	280	Mpac♦	325	+ 11	...	-10.2
1800	1300	MS Intl♦	1640	- 15	1.8	21.4
3318	1682	Oxford Instruments	2748	+ 94	0.9	32.5
2413½	1779½	Phillips Elec	1979½	+ 41½	3.7	-46.2
4½	1	PipeHawk♦	2½		...	-3.2
5490	2860	Renishaw	4850	+ 70	1.6	42.1
1532½	938	**Rolls-Royce**	1463	+ 83	0.8	21.1
489½	286½	Rotork	486½	+ ½	1.7	35.2
106	60	SDI Group♦	91	- 2	...	19.4
318½	161	Senior	290½		1.0	-84.8
2010½	1989½	SKF Group	1992½		3.0	29.7
2746½	2088	**Smiths**	2642	+ 43	1.8	38.0
215	135	Solid State♦	186½	+ 2½	1.5	25.9
245	170	Somero Enter♦	225	- 7	3.4	15.9
8050	5930	**Spirax Group**	6990	+ 65	2.4	31.5
7½	4½	Tanfield♦	4½		...	-4.5
350	240	Thorpe FW♦	259	+ 6	2.8	11.9
142½	47	Transense Tech♦	48½		...	5.2
507½	346½	Vesuvius	364½	+ ½	6.5	17.3
710	325	Volex	514	+ 7	0.9	19.6
3580	2254	**Weir**	2704	- 40	1.6	28.3
2060	809½	XP Power	1622	+ 52	...	-38.6

Health

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
284½	187	Advanced Medical♦	200	- ½	1.0	46.6
12½	5	Allergy Therapeutics♦	5½	- ½	...	-6.5
8	0½	CelLBxHealth♦	1½		...	-0.2
580	370	Anpario♦	530		2.4	13.2
15732	9892	**AstraZeneca**	12720	- 414	1.9	25.9
3½	1½	Cambridge Nutri Sci♦	1½		...	2.5
259½	193	**Convatec**	228½	- 1½	2.3	35.7
38	20	Potter & Moore♦	22½	- ½	2.4	7.4
116½	72	Eco Animal Health♦	97	- ½	...	29.8
32	21½	EKF Diagnostics♦	25½	- ½	...	54.9
13½	0½	Futura Medical♦	0½		...	-0.1
3228½	1943	Genus	2244	+ 18	1.5	76.6
2282	1288½	**GSK**	1940	- 67	3.6	13.7
0½	0½	Gunsynd♦	0½		...	-2.2
416½	274½	**Haleon**	368½	- 11½	2.0	19.8
2004	1187	Hikma Pharma	1594	- 36	3.9	11.8
285½	150½	Hutchmed China♦	167½	- 6	...	4.2
19½	1½	ImmuPharma♦	3½	- ½	...	-30.8
32	12½	Inspiration Health♦	18½	- ½	...	-25.9
15	6½	IXICO♦	6½	- ½	...	-4.5
1	0½	Thalia Therapeutics♦	0½		...	-4.0
77½	53½	NIOX Group♦	60½	- 1	2.6	35.6
131.50	91.56	Novartis	CHF 126.78	- 2.96	2.9	41.6
962	418	Oxford Biomedica	565	+ 19	...	-21.8
0½	0½	Physiomics♦	0½		...	-2.8
4½	1½	Proteome Sciences♦	1½		...	-1.7
6522½	3664	**Reckitt Benck**	5300	- 100	4.1	11.3
27	10½	RUA Life Sci♦	25	+ ½	...	-107.1
29	9½	Sareum Holdings♦	21		...	-8.8
1441½	1050	**Smith & Neph**	1188	- 26½	2.4	22.3
256½	140½	Spire Healthcare	234½	+ ½	0.6	57.2
14	5	Talisman Metals♦	6½		...	1.8
0½	0½	Valirx♦	0½		...	-0.3

Industrials

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
79½	58½	Accsys Tech♦	74½	+ ½	...	32.7
4780½	3665½	BASF	4366½	+ 32	4.4	28.0
4606½	2164½	Bayer	4139½	+ 73½	0.2	-13.1
98½	71	Coats Group	80½	- ½	3.1	18.4
3317	2426½	**Croda**	3271	+ 51	3.4	73.7
414½	230	Cropper (James)♦	357		...	11.6
184	136	Elementis	177½	+ 2½	1.9	30.6
110	6½	Haydale♦	101	+ ½	...	...
4115	2095	International Paper	3205	- 30	4.3	-8.3
2434	1730½	Johnson Matthey	2000	+ 30	3.9	-35.8
1174½	660	Mondi	875½	+ 86½	1.4	27.3
169½	110	Robinson♦	125		4.8	9.2
957½	597	Swire Pacific	940½	- 4½	3.8	45.7
13	5½	Symphony Enviro♦	8½		...	-7.6
124	16½	Synthomer	91½	+ 2½	...	-1.0
2850½	2026½	Takeda Pharma	2672½	- 12	3.6	-99.1
819	515	Victrex	780	- 2	7.6	24.4
430	320	Wynnstay♦	365		4.9	36.9
479½	265	Zotefoams	461½	- ½	1.7	10.0

Leisure

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
458	231	Accesso Tech♦	315	- 2	...	15.2
260	160	Celtic♦	213		...	6.0
249½	164	Domino's Pizza	205	- ½	5.5	13.6
1031	500½	**Entain**	550½	- 10½	3.6	-5.3
73½	19½	Evoke	44½	- ½	...	-0.4
23610	6722	Flutter Ent	7588	- 624	...	-48.5
55	29	Gaming Realms♦	30½	+ ½	...	15.2
294½	210	Heavitree♦	300		2.2	5.5
244	130	Heavitree A♦	225		2.9	4.2
175.70	133.84	**InterCont'l Hotels**	$168.95	- 0.20	1.1	32.8
301½	223½	Mitch & Butlers	280	+ 4½	...	9.4
297	129½	On The Beach	187	+ 3½	2.1	34.0
164½	86	Rank Group	100½	+ 1½	2.9	10.6
212½	137½	SSP	200½	+ ½	2.2	-21.6
0½	0½	Bow Street Group♦	0½		...	-0.3
786½	530½	Wetherspoon JD	773	+ 3	1.6	12.9
3302	2098	**Whitbread**	2527	+ 1	3.8	20.5

Media

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
76½	51½	Aeorema Comms♦	62		4.3	49.3
29	16	Altitude Group♦	26		...	20.3
115	70½	Arcontech Group♦	79		5.1	11.3
844½	418½	**Autotrader**	526½	- 4½	2.2	15.4
680	435	Bloomsbury Publ	623	- 15	2.6	18.8
3½		Caledonian Hldgs♦	1½	- ½	...	-0.1
60	40	Catalyst Media♦	42½		...	23.1
0½	0½	[illegible]♦	0½		...	-3.1
23½	9	Ebiquity♦	9½		...	-0.9
789½	262½	Future	309½	- 18½	5.5	4.9
154	60½	GlobalData	79½	- 4½	1.9	18.1
106	44	IG Design Group♦	101½	- 2	1.0	-0.9
1000	719	**Informa**	913½	+ 8½	2.5	...
87½	65½	ITV	75½	- ½	6.6	12.8
228	98½	ME Group	111½	- 1½	7.5	7.4
0½	0½	Mediazest♦	0½		...	14.2
27	12	Mission Group♦	19		...	-0.9
220½	139½	Mony Group	201½	- 11½	6.3	13.2
2341½	1624½	News Corp A	2076½	- 98½	0.7	...
2606½	1881½	News Corp B	2445½	- 25½	0.6	...
439½	217	Next 15 Group♦	295	- 6	5.2	-9.8
1337	870½	**Pearson**	1292½	- 33½	1.9	25.1
4½	3	Primorus Inv♦	3½		...	5.0
75½	40½	Reach	46	+ ½	12.8	-1.1
59	40	React♦	42½		...	-29.3
3976	1991	**Relx**	2675	- 199	2.6	23.8
827	391½	Rightmove	456½	- 31½	2.3	16.3
270	111	SpaceandPeople♦	137½		...	6.4
140½	95½	STV Group	104	- 2½	...	-9.6
470	170½	System1 Group♦	325	- 20	1.8	31.2
4359	4359	21st Cent Fox A	4359		1.0	...
3398½	3306½	21st Cent Fox B	3398½		1.2	...
369	230	Wilmington	287	+ 9	4.0	22.3
415½	218½	WPP	299½	- 22½	5.0	6.0
71½	40	Zinc Media♦	56½		...	-5.5

Natural Resources

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0½	0	ADM Energy	0		...	1.2
17½	8½	H-Power♦	10½	+ ½	...	-4.3
89½	36½	Afentra♦	61½	- ½	...	-59.1
0	0	Arkadian Steel Metals♦	0		...	-1.3
0½	0½	Alien Metals♦	0½		...	-12.4
2½	1	Aminex	1½		...	-13.7
6924	3342½	Anglo Amer Plat	5548½	+ 375½	8.1	21.0
4289	2042	**Anglo Amer**	3726	+ 124	0.8	15.1
485	154½	Anglo Asian Mng♦	390	+ 20	0.8	33.8
4475	1850½	**Antofagasta**	3704	+ 155	1.3	36.9
1½	0½	Arc Minerals♦	0½		...	-1.3
2½	1½	Ariana Resources♦	1½		...	-15.0
0½	0½	Arkle Resources♦	0½		...	-10.2
2½	0½	Asiamet Resources♦	1½		...	-12.4
1094	440½	Atalaya Mine	885½	+ 2	1.1	17.0
4½	2½	Beacon Energy♦	3		...	-0.7
13	4	Beowulf Mining♦	6½		...	-2.0

PRICES

Major indices

New York	
Dow Jones	52,208.06 (+613.92)
Nasdaq	25,122.18 (+679.24)
S&P 500	7,437.63 (+121.48)
Tokyo	
Nikkei 225	61867.43 (+433.24)
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	25858.88 (+50.96)
Amsterdam	
Amsterdam AEX	1104.69 (+11.59)
Sydney	
Australia AO	9122.70 (-77.00)
Frankfurt	
DAX	25612.03 (+151.55)
Singapore	
Singapore Straits	5673.58 (-39.61)
Brussels	
Brussels BEL20	5655.00 (-72.91)
Paris	
Paris CAC	8485.64 (+77.37)
Zurich	
Zurich SMI	14392.49 (-93.61)
Zurich DJ Euro Stoxx 50	6344.40 (+95.56)
London	
FTSE100	10897.27 (-11.14)
FTSE250	24079.14 (+82.33)
FTSE350	5919.47 (-3.25)
FTSE Eurotop 100	5037.54 (+44.97)
FTSE All Share	5853.32 (-3.27)
FTSE Non Financials	6441.53 (nc)
TechMark Focus	9198.35 (-18.61)
US$	1.3428 (+0.0139)
Euro	1.1672 (-0.0003)
SDR	0.9845 (+0.0041)
CPI Jun (2015=100)	142.5
RPI Jun (1987=100)	416.5
RPIX Jun (1987=100)	409.7

London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	26-Sep	86.61	87	86.31	86.75	240919	1366845
	26-Dec	86.32	86.52	86.32	86.74	66	8
	27-Mar				86.64	0	
3-Mth Sonia Index	26-Jun	96.25	96.255	96.245	96.255	18782	405033
	26-Sep	96.065	96.125	96.03	96.105	212363	427526
	26-Dec	95.825	95.915	95.805	95.885	182818	532865
	27-Mar	95.675	95.77	95.65	95.74	119934	383252
3 Mth Sonia Index	27-Jun	95.615	95.71	95.59	95.68	103279	389555
	27-Sep	95.61	95.705	95.58	95.675	86340	252872
	27-Dec	95.65	95.73	95.615	95.7	82089	290624
3-Mth Euribor	26-Sep	97.41	97.42	97.4	97.415	101189	666205
	26-Dec	97.21	97.25	97.205	97.235	171805	960480
	27-Mar	97.09	97.145	97.08	97.125	145190	455097
	27-Jun	97.05	97.105	97.035	97.08	120211	480420
	27-Sep	97.055	97.105	97.035	97.08	110143	445296
3-Mth Saron Index	26-Jun	100.0475	100.0475	100.045	100.045	68	71385
	26-Sep	100.035	100.04	100.035	100.035	1293	74591
	26-Dec	99.965	99.985	99.955	99.97	2286	56015
	27-Mar	99.83	99.875	99.83	99.855	2069	34615
	27-Jun	99.73	99.775	99.73	99.75	2274	24874
	27-Sep	99.655	99.695	99.65	99.67	2003	27069
	27-Dec	99.595	99.63	99.595	99.61	1388	20008
FTSE100	26-Sep	10847.5	10971	10785.5	10880.5	66243	470837
	26-Dec	10880	11036	10877.5	10949	11	751
FTSEurofirst 80	26-Sep				8537.5	0	
	26-Dec				8581.6	0	

Tradeweb

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Commodities

Natural Gas $

2.769	+0.047

Light Crude Oil

83.9	-0.56

Crude Oils ($/barrel FOB)

WTI SEP 26	83.85	-0.61
WTI OCT 26	81	-1.04
WTI NOV 26	78.27	-1.41
WTI DEC 26	76.18	-1.56
WTI JAN 27	74.7	-1.58

Products

Fuel Oil	466.326	3.718
[illegible]	743.696	6.721

ICE Futures

Gas Oil

Aug1296.75-1296	Dec1013.5-1011
Sep1207.25-1207	Jan974.5-974
Oct1136.5-1136	
Nov1071.75-1071.5	Volume: 14932

Brent

Sep83.57-83.55	Dec81.83-81.79
Oct86.99-86.97	Jan80.32-80.29
Nov83.55-83.52	Volume: 77040

Cocoa

Sep3812 -90	Sep3933 -84
Dec3869 -93	Dec3905 -83
Mar3959 -88	Mar3959 -88
May3958 -91	May3958 -91
Jul3958 -88	Volume: 2766

Robusta Coffee

Sep3799 +26	May3702 +40
Nov3778 +29	Jul3710 +67
Jan3744 +28	
May3702 +40	Volume: 2085

White Sugar

Oct457.4 -1	Aug 457 -1
Dec457.4 -0.8	Oct457.2 +0.3
Mar459.2 -1.1	
May459.2 -1.1	Volume: 18869

London Grain Futures

LIFFE Wheat (close £/t)

Nov200 +1.5	May209 +4
Jan 200.5	Jul 207.25
Mar202.75	Volume: 8513

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0¼	0	Bezant Resources♦	0¼		...	10.9
3495	1873½	BHP Group	3158	+ 41	3.2	23.8
14	7¾	Borders & Sthn Pet♦	11½	- ¼	...	-46.5
122½	10¼	Bougainville	11¼		...	-16.6
609¾	397½	**BP**	542½	- ¾	4.6	...
0	0	Buccaneer Energy♦	0		...	-0.7
8¼	1½	Cadence Minerals♦	5¼		...	-9.8
5½	2¼	Cadogan Energy	3¼		...	-11.2
2900	1250	Caledonia Mining♦	1395	- 5	3.0	6.6
3¾	1½	Caspian Sunrise♦	1½		...	3.4
244	125½	Cent Asia Metals♦	140¼	+ 1¼	8.1	-4.7
2¾	1½	Chariot Ltd♦	1½		...	...
0	0	Clontarf Energy♦	0		...	-6.3
0½	0¼	Corcel♦	0¼		...	-2.1
18½	8	Crism Therapeutics♦	9½		...	-1.9
300½	99¼	DRD Gold	154¼	+ 1¾	2.6	13.1
0½	0¼	ECR Minerals♦	0¼		...	-3.1
0½	0	Empyrean Energy♦	0		...	-0.4
5620	2238	**Endeavour**	3555	+ 68	3.7	17.0
28	9¼	EnQuest	23½	- ¼	3.4	...
6	2	Eurasia Mining♦	2½	- ¼	...	16.7
2¾	0¾	Europa Oil & Gas♦	1½	- ¼	...	-7.9
87½	27½	Ferrexpo	28½		...	-4.5
4472	1371	**Fresnillo**	2522	+ 41	3.8	18.0
30	3	Galantas Gold♦	21	+ ½	...	-5.6
12½	2¼	GCM Resources♦	4½	+ ¼	...	-5.9
7½	2¼	Gem Diamonds	3¼	- ¼	...	-0.1
3¾	1½	Getech♦	3¼		...	-7.6
707¼	275½	**Glencore**	539	+ 18½	2.3	...
0½	0¼	Geo Exploration♦	0¼		...	-4.3
4582½	1793½	Gold Fields	2464½	+ 53½	4.7	...
21	5¼	Goldplat♦	17¼	+ ¼	3.0	29.6
2	0¼	Goldstone Res♦	0¼		...	-0.9
800	230	Greatland Resources♦	537	+ 19½	...	16.2
353½	176	Griffin Mining♦	295	- 6½	...	32.7
235	157½	Gulf Keystone	170½	- ¼	7.4	32.9
858	296½	Hochschild	439	+ 2¾	1.0	15.1
553	288½	Hunting	440	+ 9	2.2	22.6
0¼	0	Ironveld♦	0		...	-2.1
219½	56½	ITM Power♦	100¼	+ 2	...	-13.6
5¼	2¼	Jubilee Metals♦	2½		...	-3.2
3¼	0¼	Karel Diamond Res♦	0¼		...	-3.9
2¾	0¼	KEFI Gold and Copper♦	1		...	-9.1
345	178½	Kenmare Res	197¼	+ 3¼	...	-0.7
5¾	1½	Landore Res♦	1½		...	-1.8
0¼	0¼	Lansdowne Resources♦	0¼		...	-1.2
4¼	2¼	Lexington Gold♦	2½		...	-24.4
19½	10½	Metals Exploration♦	12½		...	16.8
0¾	0¼	Native Resources♦	0¼		...	-0.1
4½	1	Nostrum Oil & Gas	4		...	-0.8
0¾	0¼	Oriole Resources♦	0¼		...	-17.0
		Ormonde Mining			...	...
41	10	Orosur Mining♦	15½	+ ½	...	...
190¼	52½	Pan African Res	95½	+ 2½	2.3	17.9
33½	6¼	Pantheon Res♦	12	+ ½	...	-42.2
27	12½	Parkmead Group♦	21½		...	3.2
22½	5½	Petra Diamonds	6½		...	-0.2
3¼	0¼	Petrel Resources♦	0¼		...	-4.0
1¾	0¼	Petro Matad♦	1½		...	-4.8
9	2½	Plexus Holdings♦	3½		...	-1.2
920	672	Porvair	844	- 16	0.8	21.5

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
5½	2¼	Prospex Energy♦	3½	+ ¼	...	-4.6
5	0¼	Quadrise♦	1		...	-5.8
160	35	Reabold Resources♦	73	- 2	...	-92.5
0	0	Red Rock Res♦	0		...	-0.3
10418½	5870½	Rio Tinto Ltd	8789½	+ 167	3.9	16.6
9117	4844½	**Rio Tinto**	7136	+ 159	4.9	15.6
0½	0¼	Rome Resources♦	0½		...	-15.4
375	178	Serabi Gold♦	257	+ 2	1.9	4.8
302½	146	Serica Energy♦	237½	+ 2¾	6.7	-24.5
3758½	2553½	**Shell**	3319	- 4½	4.6	14.7
7	2¼	Shuka Minerals♦	2¼	- ¼	...	-2.1
13	1½	Sound Energy♦	1½		...	-1.4
24½	5½	Star Energy♦	23	+ 1	...	-4.1
4½	0¼	Sunda Energy♦	1½	+ ¼	...	-1.6
0	0	Sunrise Resources♦	0		...	-2.3
0		Synergia Energy♦	0		...	0.4
0¼	0	Tertiary Minerals♦	0¼		...	-7.8
0¾	0¼	Thor Energy♦	0¼		...	-0.6
7066	4293½	Total Eng SE	6474½	- 20¼	4.6	12.6
0	0	Tower Resources♦	0		...	-0.4
19½	3½	Tullow Oil	15	+ ½	...	50.2
0	0	UK Oil & Gas♦	0		...	-0.2
13	2¼	URU Metals♦	4½	- ¼	...	-2.8
0¾	0¼	Vast Resources#	0¼		...	-0.5
9	0¼	Westmount Energy♦	3½		...	-0.4
1¾	0¼	Xtract Resources♦	1½	+ ¼	...	-4.8
4¾	2¼	Zephyr Energy♦	3½		...	-8.8

Professional & Support Services

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
4570	2980	4imprint	4200	- 22	4.3	13.9
585	464	Andrews Sykes♦	565		4.6	13.1
130	103½	BTG Consulting♦	106½	- 1	4.3	20.1
2832	1981	**Bunzl**	2796	- 18	2.7	19.8
416	215	Capita	265	- 9½	...	-1.8
49½	23½	CEPS♦	40½		...	-11.5
165	90	Christie Group♦	152½	- 4	2.3	30.8
2581½	2000	**Compass**‡	2378½	- 100½	2.1	29.8
87	64½	Croma Security♦	67½		3.6	11.8
6740	4188	**DCC Energy**	6330	- 20	3.4	...
34	15	Dialas Grp♦	32		4.7	24.6
7720	4970	**Diploma**	7330	+ 220	0.9	53.2
800	506	DiscoverIE‡	771	- 2	1.7	25.5
114¾	78½	Essentra	106	- 1½	2.0	...
4054	2203	**Experian**	2898	- 179	1.8	23.7
330	130½	FIH Group♦	135	- 5	5.0	-3.3
850	588	Hargreaves Servs♦	796	- 4	5.0	8.5
5850	3519½	**Intertek**	5835	+ 5	2.8	26.8
250½	163½	Int'l Workplace	199½	- 2½	0.5	...
172½	123½	Johnson Service	150½	- 3½	3.2	16.2
554	360	Journeo♦	477½		...	19.7
254	178½	Kier Group	241½	+ 7	3.2	18.8
1220	910	Latham (J)♦‡	1085	- 10	3.4	11.7
3755	2100	London Security♦	3600		2.7	18.6
307	204	LSL Property Servs	245	+ 4	4.7	14.8
100½	59½	Macfarlane	71½	+ 1½	5.1	17.9
200	71½	Maintel Holdings♦	72½		...	-6.1
28	15½	Malvern Intl♦	21		...	-2.8
448½	310	Mears Group	429½	+ ½	4.1	7.7
282½	101½	Michael Page	187½	- 8¾	4.6	60.8
214	134½	Mitie Group‡	208	- ½	2.2	31.5
15¾	0¼	MobilityOne#	4½		...	-2.1
137	71½	Newmark Security♦	110	- 4	...	15.6
280	170	Norman Broadbent♦	195	+ 4½	...	6.1
158	84½	Northern Bear♦	115	+ ½	6.5	3.8
187½	110	NWF Group♦	137	- ½	6.4	7.4

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
60	42	PCI-PAL♦	52	+ 1½	...	...
12½	7	Petards♦	10½		...	-15.1
12¾	7	PHSC♦	7½		...	-6.4
0½	0¼	PowerHouse Energy♦	0¼		...	-3.1
64	41½	Record	45½	- ¼	8.0	11.5
978	772	Renew Holdings♦	900	+ 7	2.3	14.6
507	342½	**Rentokil**	352	- 9½	2.7	25.4
290	222	Restore♦	284	- 2	2.6	-60.4
7	1½	River Global A♦‡	2½		...	-0.3
30	13½	Roebuck Food Group♦	26		...	-9.8
742½	536½	RS Group	701½	+ 1½	3.3	20.3
150	85	RTC Group♦	90		7.5	6.4
113½	68	RWS Holdings♦	92½	- ¼	6.8	-3.4
612	520	Science Group♦	585	+ 3	1.7	7.8
325½	205	Serco	241½	- 2½	1.9	16.8
79½	54	Smiths News	73½	+ 1½	7.5	6.3
30	13½	Software Circle♦	16		...	-76.2
52½	36	Staffline Group♦	46	+ 2	...	11.8
270½	132½	SThree	258½	- 3½	5.5	18.9
350	146	Synectics♦	185		2.7	8.4
2	0¼	Thruvision Group♦	0½		...	-0.6
74	46	Tribal♦	62	- 1½	2.1	14.8
85	58	Vianet♦‡	66		3.6	46.2
490	294½	ZIGUP	468	+ 3	5.8	13.9

Retailing

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
117½	82½	AO World‡	98	+ 1	...	15.4
269½	140	B&M European‡	225½	- 4½	4.3	13.8
115½	58½	Card Factory	76½	+ 1	6.5	8.5
1648	1062	CVS Group	1251	- 4	0.7	17.8
204	113	DFS Furniture	144½	+ ½	0.7	13.8
1249	707	Dunelm	890	- 4	7.9	11.5
828½	598	Frasers Group	811	- 4½	...	9.4
2046	1407½	Greggs	2032	+ 30	3.4	16.9
245½	123½	Halfords	243½	+ 2½	3.7	16.8
981	713	**Howden Joinery**	789	+ 2½	2.8	16.8
895	640½	Inchcape	854½	- 1½	3.9	11.8
1½	0¼	Imaging Biometrics	0¼		...	-3.5
106½	64	**JD Sports**‡	93½	- 1½	1.3	10.8
372½	240½	**Kingfisher**	309½	- 1½	4.0	22.1
411½	301½	**Marks & Spencer**	409½	+ 4½	1.0	32.2
4	0¼	Mothercare♦	1	+ ¼	...	0.5
93½	61½	Naked Wines♦	72	- 1	...	-7.8
15510	11280	**Next**‡	15240	+ 60	1.8	20.1
397½	140½	Ocado	211½	+ 16½	...	4.5
249½	167½	Pets at Home	213½	+ 5	3.5	15.5
575	200	Pinewood Tech Group	431	+ 1	...	89.8
695	172½	Saga	679	+ 18	...	...
370½	291½	**Sainsbury's**	355½	- 2½	3.9	20.6
1120	378½	WH Smith	445		...	-4.8
14	4½	Sosandar♦	13½	+ ½	...	96.4
510½	406½	**Tesco**	492	- 9½	2.9	17.9
50	30½	Topps Tiles	35½	- ¼	8.8	11.5

Technology

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
252	140½	Alfa Financial	162½	- 11	5.9	16.8
315	196	Aptitude Software	196	- 3	2.8	26.8
129	55	Bango♦	66½		...	-9.1
20	12½	BATM Adv Comms	12½	- ¼	...	-4.8
33	19½	Berkeley Res	25		...	-45.6
3¾	1½	Blackbird♦	1½		...	-2.4
194	74	Celebrus Tech♦‡	108½	- ½	3.1	-128.4
28	12½	Cirata♦	14½	- ½	...	-3.3
0¾	0¼	CloudCoCo♦	0¼		...	0.5
4962	2192	**Computacenter**	4710	- 54	1.6	32.2
286	173½	Concurrent Tech♦	270	- 10	0.4	46.1
13½	7½	Corero♦	8½		...	-114.1
2644	988	Craneware♦	1194	- 44	2.8	28.5
110	50	Crimson Tide♦	87½		...	-3.6
9½	5½	CyanConnode Hldgs♦	9		...	-7.7
15½	8	Dillistone Group♦	10½		...	-7.2

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0¾	0	Forgent♦	0		...	-0.8
165½	94½	FDM Group	128	- 6½	7.8	24.6
480	114	Filtronic♦	235	- 15	...	36.8
265	180½	GB Group‡	223	- 5	2.0	-7.3
51	24	Ilika♦	26½	+ ½	...	-6.6
138	56	Ingenta♦	59½	- 2½	7.5	5.8
178	73	Intercede♦	107		...	18.8
28½	11½	Iomart♦	12		...	-1.5
72½	4½	IQE♦	40	+ 1½	...	-10.6
4453½	912½	LG Electronics	1489½	- 15½	1.7	...
79	37	MTI Wireless♦	66	- ½	3.1	15.1
14½	2	Nanoco Group	2½	- ¼	...	-2.3
138	94½	Netcall♦	118		0.8	48.2
36	22	Northamber♦	24½	- ½	2.4	-1.7
60½	37½	Oxford Metrics♦	38½	+ 1½	8.4	-70.4
31	17	Pennant Intl♦	29½		...	-5.9
447	210	Playtech	307½	- 2	...	0.9
50	33½	Pulsar Group♦	35½		...	-4.5
551½	398½	QinetiQ‡	497½	- 5½	2.2	24.8
117	88	RM	98	- ¼	...	37.7
6½	2½	Seeing Machines♦	4½		...	-11.8
69½	35½	Shearwater Group♦	56½	+ ½	...	-1.4
1998	1083	Softcat	1960	- 27	1.5	29.4
90	5	Sorted Group#	9		...	-0.2
1010½	545	Tele Ericsson	728½	- 13½	3.2	11.8
1335	771½	**The Sage Grp**	967½	- 54½	2.3	25.6
91½	52½	Touchstar♦‡	85½		3.8	-6.4
435	280	Tracsis♦	355		0.8	...
380	230	Triad Group‡	370		2.4	37.3
330	210	Water Intel♦	307½	- 6½	...	14.4
150	96½	Xaar	119	- 1	...	-27.7
17	8½	Zoo Digital♦	10½	+ 1	...	-1.8

Telecoms

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
436½	196½	**Airtel Africa**	341½	- 6½	1.5	24.6
242½	173	**BT Group**	204	- 1½	4.1	18.5
169½	106	Currys	168½	+ ½	1.8	10.9
1186	687	Gamma Comms	946	- 19	2.3	13.6
247½	113½	Helios Towers	204½	+ 7½	...	74.3
0½	0¼	Gana Media♦	0¼		...	-3.9
1936	638	Telecom Plus	848	- 13	5.9	8.4
131½	80½	**Vodafone**‡	119½	- 2½	3.3	-84.3

Transport

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
260	203½	Braemar‡	229	+ 8	3.1	31.6
4992	3365	Clarkson	4728	+ 10	2.4	22.1
683½	332½	EasyJet	624½	+ 13½	2.1	9.5
240½	152½	FirstGroup‡	183½	+ 2½	3.9	8.6
554	320	Fisher (James)	499	+ 6	...	-52.8
492½	332½	**Intl Cons Air**	438½	+ 6½	1.6	7.2
685	458	Irish Cont	677½		2.1	17.8
38½	17	Mobico Group	26½	- 3½	...	-1.2
7	1½	Sutton Harbour♦	4½		...	-0.4
1463	832	Wizz Air	1071	+ 31	...	...

Utilities

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
220½	152½	**Centrica**	152½	- 2½	3.7	-101.7
937½	613½	Drax Group	745	- 14½	4.1	36.8
485	420	Jersey Electricity	445		4.9	12.4
1428½	1000	**National Grid**	1184½	- 8½	4.1	18.1
606	439½	Pennon‡	464½	+ 1½	6.3	23.9
3335	2381	**Severn Trent**	3028	- 4	4.2	24.5
2767½	1597	**SSE**‡	2347	+ 25	2.9	22.2
1497	1072	**United Utilities**‡	1380	+ 1	3.9	16.8

INVESTMENT COMPANIES

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
4497	1825	**3i Group**	2847	- 50	3.0	5.3
394½	325	3i Infrastructure	385½	- 3	3.5	12.0
1758	1408½	Aberforth Smlr	1696	- 24	2.8	26.5
1356	1178	**Alliance Witan**	1330	- 12	2.2	71.9
395	321	Artemis UK Future Lead‡	388½	+ 2½	4.0	31.4
220	116½	Athelney Trust	165		6.1	14.5
273	235½	AVI Global	295	- 1	1.8	50.3
194	154½	AVI Japan	169	+ 3	1.3	57.5
331	260	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	308	- 2	0.8	...
116½	91½	Baillie Gifford Eur Gr	115½		0.6	...
1032	811½	Baillie Gifford Jpn	1032	+ 24	1.0	...
168½	123	Baillie Gifford SN	159½	+ 3½	0.4	...
225	180½	Baillie Gifford UK Gr	220	- 2	2.8	35.3
153½	120½	Bankers Invstmt Tst‡	146		1.9	64.9
445	385	BH Macro GBP	416		...	19.6
1684	804	Biotech Growth	1630	+ 4	...	-457.9
284	197	BlckRck Amer Inc	279½	- 2	5.6	98.8
205	116½	BlckRck Eng&Res Inc	174	+ 2½	3.3	49.7
208	159½	BlckRck Frtr Inv	190½	+ 3	4.0	25.2
625	507	BlackRock Grt Euro	589	+ 6	1.2	85.5
238	198	BlckRck Inc&Grth‡	228	- 8	3.4	31.5
288½	230½	BlckRck Smlr‡	268½	- 2½	3.0	30.7
1072½	543½	BlckRck Wld Min	882	+ 15	2.7	36.6
1665	1274	Brown Adv US Sm	1590	- 35	...	-386.4
1562	1336	Brunner‡	1540	+ 6	1.8	55.3
395	312	Caledonia Inv‡	384½	- ½	2.0	49.9
599	486	City of Lon IT‡	592	- 3	3.7	27.4
155½	87	Crystal Amber Fd	89½		-64.9	...
592	439½	CT Priv Eq Ord‡	500		5.6	...
373	320	CT UK Cap & Inc	362	- 1	3.7	29.8
128	92	CT UK HIT B‡	112½	+ 1	5.3	23.2
126	97	CT UK HIT‡	117½		5.1	24.2
489½	460	Dunedin Ent‡	475		...	...
860	737½	Edinburgh IT	846	- 14	3.8	31.8
294½	185½	Edin Wwide	233	- 1	...	-289.9
957	782	European Opps‡	937		-78.1	...
1332	325½	**F&C Inv Trust**‡	330	- 2	1.3	73.5
672	546	Fidlty Asian Val	594	+ 10	3.5	26.4
339	241	Fidelity China Sp	265		3.4	28.7
1574	810	FdltyEmrgMkt	1346	+ 8	1.5	58.3
442	367½	Fidelity European Trust	429	+ 6½	2.3	38.0
468½	372	Fidlty Spec Val	465		2.2	37.9
928	706½	Fins Gwth & Inc	810	- 20	2.5	42.9
84½	69½	GCP Infrastructure	83½	+ ¼	8.4	38.8
370	312	Global Opps Tst	323	- 1	3.2	41.4
86	64	Golden Prospect‡	85½		-12.8	...
68½	57½	Greencoat Renew	67	- 1½	-16.6	...
120½	92½	Greencoat UK Wind	108½	+ 2½	9.9	-12.5
344	290	Hansa Investment Co‡	328	- 6	1.3	74.5
330	244	Hansa Inv Co A‡	315	+ 1	1.4	71.6
3470	2630½	Hrvest Gbl Pt Eq	3335	- 30	...	-56.0
212½	173½	Hend High Inc	206	- 1	5.4	18.3
966	769	Hend Smlr	953	+ 3	3.0	36.5
3290½	2285	Herald Inv Trust	2950	+ 15	...	...
524½	318½	HgCapital Trust	388½	- 1½	1.3	...
138	107½	HICL Infra	136		6.2	9.9
1611½	1288½	ICG Ent Tr	1422	- 18	3.0	-48.6
494½	379	Impax Env Mkts	430½	+ 3	1.2	87.1

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
519	366	Invesco Asia Dragon Tr	476½	+ 9½	4.0	48.5
178½	150½	Invesco Bond Inc‡	170	- 1	7.2	13.0
419	318	Invesco Gbl Eq Inc‡	417	+ 1	3.8	83.2
1238	1041	JPM American	1184	- 10	1.0	...
652	383½	JPM Asia Gro & Inc‡	550	+ 14	5.7	...
313	246½	JPM China‡	267½	- 2½	5.1	68.8
980	782½	JPM Claverhs‡	970	- 4	3.8	28.8
318	181½	JPM Emrg EMEA Sec	290½		0.2	...
181½	118½	JPM Em Mkts‡	157½	+ 1	4.8	68.3
666	548	JPMorgan Euro‡	622		2.6	34.2
221	145	JPM Em Mkts Div Inc‡	195½	+ 2	3.1	34.4
615	529½	JPM GGI	604	- 3	4.1	73.0
1106	799	JPM India‡	893	+ 7	5.0	...
849	633	JPM Japan	789	+ 16	1.1	77.7
463	365	JPM Smllr Co	425	- 6½	0.8	...
1258	977½	Law Debenture	1250	+ 2	3.0	33.5
186½	141½	Lowland Inv‡	184	+ 1½	3.7	27.3
139½	137	Marwyn Val Inv	139		15.3	...
282	234½	Mercantile IT‡	279	+ ½	3.0	30.2
673	536	Merchants Trust‡	667	+ 1	4.5	21.8
804	682	Mid Wynd	774	- 12	1.1	...
1664	1322	Monks Inv Trust	1566	- 18	0.1	...
189	142	Montanaro Eur Smll	174½	+ 1½	0.9	89.9
1034	854½	Murray Income Trust	1020	- 4	4.0	26.4
371	283½	Murray Intl‡	367	- 3	3.4	26.4
437	345	Pacific Assets Trust	404	+ 5	1.4	72.1
409	319½	Pantheon Intl	393½		...	-56.1
5095	3636	**Pershing Sqr**	3720	- 20	1.5	3.5
555	507	Personal Assets‡	544		1.0	90.2
743½	384	**Polar CapTech**	611½	+ 14	...	-728.0
86½	63½	Renewables Infra	77½	+ ½	9.8	-14.3
2610	1906½	RIT Cap Ptnr	2565	+ 55	1.8	...
990½	490	Riverstone	589		...	-384.5
738	488½	Schroder IntlRt	667	+ 7	1.7	68.0
892	585	Schrd Asia Pac	780	+ 10	1.7	59.0
374	310	Schrod Inc Gwth‡	374	+ 2	3.9	29.8
401	258	Schrod Jap Gwth‡	372	+ 9	3.3	53.8
772	652	Schrod UKMid‡	759	+ 2	3.0	30.3
17½	12½	Schroder UK PP Tr	17		...	-78.8
560	480½	Scot American	558		2.9	35.7
1563	1015½	**Scot Mortgage**	1319	+ 1	0.3	...
87	75½	Sequoia Eco‡	86½	- ¼	0.0	12.6
253	215½	STS Gbl Inc Grwth	232	- 4	3.6	35.7
352	196½	Temp Emg Mkt‡	297½	+ 5½	1.8	55.2
426	329	Temple Bar	422	+ 1½	3.7	30.6
198½	162½	The Gbl Smaller	190½	- 2½	1.7	64.5
9	0¼	Potentially AI	6½	- ½	-1.7	...
364½	291	TR Property‡	317½		5.1	20.1
188	188	UIL	196		39.3	...
302	239½	Utilico Emerging Mkt‡	285	- 1	3.4	21.0
865	678	Vietnam Ent Inv	707	+ 15	...	4.6
398	306½	Ww Health	377	- 14½	0.6	...

♦AIM company; # Price at suspension; ‖ Ex dividend; ‡ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; ° figures or report awaited; ... No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index. Investment Cos sector Nav Dis or Prm supplied by ICE Data Services.

Exchange rates

Australia $	1.91645 (-0.00474)
Canada $	1.88476 (+0.00947)
Denmark Kr	8.73119 (+0.02098)
Euro	1.1678 (+0.0024)
Hong Kong $	10.559 (+0.079)
Hungary	422.62 (-0.68)
Indonesia	24315.79 (+169.44)
Israel	4.1129 (-0.004)
Japan Yen	214.691 (-3.631)
New Zealand $	2.29017 (-0.01561)
Norway Kr	12.8276 (+0.0041)
Poland	5.0268 (-0.0072)
Russia	107.713 (+1.014)
S Africa	22.18711 (-0.04595)
Sweden Kr	12.8308 (-0.0631)
Switzerland Fr	1.08432 (-0.0027)
Turkey Lira	63.833 (+0.4889)
USA $	1.3462 (+0.0102)

Gold/precious metals

(US dollars per ounce)

Bullion: Open $4068.59

Close $4112.67 **High** $4120.28

Low $4028.59

AM $4061.50 **PM** $4111.05

Platinum $1656.061

Silver $58.7742

Palladium $1302.795

Money rates %

Base Rates
Clearing Banks: 3.75%
ECB Refi 2.40%
Fed Fund 3.5-3.75%
Halifax Mortgage Rate (SVR) 7.24%

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.7314	8.7111	-148.672	-422.03
Euro	1.1678	1.1655	-14.86	-42.89
Montreal	1.8847	1.8757	-25.79	-78.06
New York	1.3462	1.3360	-0.45	-0.06
Oslo	12.8296	12.8283	49.84	171.25
Tokyo	214.6760	218.3540	-52.47	-158.71
Zurich	1.0843	1.0874	-36.68	-109.8

Other sterling

Argentine peso	2007.66602-2007.66797
Australian dollar	1.91640-1.91669
Bahrain dinar	0.50660-0.50860
Brazilian real	6.82070-6.82270
Euro	1.16780-1.16860
Hong Kong dollar	10.55700-10.56100
Indian rupee	128.42290-128.50290
Indonesian rupiah	24315.78906-24355.78906
Kuwaiti dinar	0.41670-0.41870
Malaysian ringgit	5.50500-5.50700
New Zealand dollar	2.29015-2.29054
Singaporean dollar	1.72593-1.72627
South African rand	22.18711-22.20034
UAE dirham	4.94410-4.94610

Dollar rates

Australia	1.42300-1.42380
Canada	1.39992-1.40002
Denmark	6.48450-6.48556
Euro	0.86730-0.86770
Hong Kong	7.84291-7.84304
Japan	159.45399-159.46500
Malaysia	4.07500-4.09000
Norway	9.52760-9.53000
Singapore	1.28201-1.28217
Sweden	9.52888-9.53091
Switzerland	0.80528-0.80533

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UK can learn from overseas culture

In a global economy, managers don't need to look far to pick up innovative ideas, as **Jane Hamilton** writes

Research by the Chartered Management Institute shows nine in ten managers think the UK would benefit from learning about workplace cultures in other high-performing economies, while 85 per cent support the adoption of foreign management practices.

Petra Wilton, CMI director of policy, says: "Britain's managers aren't looking overseas because they think someone else has all the answers, they're looking because the best leaders are always searching for new ideas. That's how innovation spreads."

Here are lessons the UK can learn from international management styles.

Nordics: Niina Nurmi, associate professor of leadership at Aalto University in Finland, says: "Nordic organisations tend to rely heavily on employee autonomy, low organisational hierarchy and the expectation that people take responsibility without close supervision. Nordic leaders tend to focus on creating the conditions for others to succeed rather than directing every aspect of their work."

South Korea: June Lee, an entrepreneur, says: "Korean workplaces share a similar language and culture, so operate on a 'common sense' which doesn't need to be spelled out. That keeps the cost of alignment low. Korea is genuinely strong at flexibility and experimentation. There's also the principle that efficiency should come from removing friction rather than adding pressure."

United States: Gordon M Sayre is associate professor of management at Emlyon business school in France. He says: "Managers and firms in the US often prioritise immediacy, short-term results and innovation, and are always looking for the next big idea. This lends itself to an 'always-on' culture. Employees can respond quickly to a crisis or rapidly changing technology, which is key to staying competitive."

China: Coral McConnon, author of *The Breakthrough Brain*, spent several years working in China. She says: "China is spectacularly agile, and there is a sense of urgency and purpose, and a willingness to experiment in the corporate environment that, possibly because of China's scale of opportunity and the pace of change, can be missing in the UK. China has a hunger to learn alongside curiosity and ambition."

The Middle East: Alain Bejjani led the giant retailer Majid Al Futtaim, managing 110 nationalities. He is now the author of *Next: Leading Through the New Realities*. He says: "The biggest thing the UK can learn is resilience by design. The Gulf builds redundancy into everything, from supply chains to energy to food security, because it has never had the luxury of assuming stability. The UK optimised for efficiency in a world it assumed would stay predictable, and has paid for it repeatedly."

Germany: Ansgar Richter is professor of corporate strategy, organisation and governance at Frankfurt School of Finance & Management. He says: "German organisations place a strong emphasis on careful preparation, technical expertise and clearly defined processes. Decisions may take longer but, once made, implementation may be more disciplined and consistent. German organisations often invest patiently in capabilities, processes and skills that may not deliver immediate returns but create sustainable competitive advantage over time."

morningmate

'We can connect them all to one goal'

Case study

June Lee is the founder of the global team collaboration platform Morningmate.

He said: "The hardest thing to bridge in international management styles is people reading the exact same signal completely differently. Silence in a meeting could mean agreement, disagreement, or just uncertainty.

"While working in London, I noticed people from a huge range of nationalities working together on the same team, and it made me think about how you align people who work so differently around a single goal. It really comes down to connecting them to one shared goal.

"Mixing cultures and people who work in different ways, with different priorities, means we all end up learning from each other."

Top tips for learning from other countries

Kirsty McManus, director of professional development services at the Institute of Directors, says boards should view different management approaches as "valuable sources of insight". Here's how to learn from global management.

Develop the ability to bridge different management cultures: Success depends not only on understanding those differences but also on being able to integrate them into a coherent and effective approach to leadership.

Embrace international learning: Combine the strengths of different management cultures.

Invest in your managers, not management hacks: Chartered Management Institute data shows 82 per cent of UK managers have never had formal management training. The highest-performing organisations invest in their managers, giving them the technical and people skills to lead.

Get out of your bubble: Multinational and exporting firms tend to be better managed because they're constantly learning from new markets, customers and competitors.

Get 1 per cent better every week: The strongest cultures are built on continuous improvement.

Six from the best

With the summer holidays in full swing, Gavin Peck is playing his part to give children screen-free time. As chief executive of The Works, he is championing creativity and has transformed the business, stepping away from online shopping to refocus on thriving high-street stores. Here is his advice for your career.

1 **Self-care isn't just a buzzword:** Leading by example means showing balance. Nothing in a business is worth your health, family or missing any milestone moment.

2 **Model and believe in your purpose:** Your work needs personal commitment, so it's not just lip service — you can't support something that you don't live by yourself.

3 **You don't have all the answers:** Leaders build trust by how they act when the way forward isn't clear. Honesty, humility and collaboration will get you the answer you need.

4 **Trying to be everything to everyone doesn't work:** Focus on what you're good at. Be proud of your strengths and invest in scaling them.

5 **Progress over perfection:** Nothing gets fixed overnight, so don't expect it from yourself or your team. Little wins make a difference to results and culture over a sustained time.

6 **Own your journey:** Honesty about what made you a leader is worth more to your team than pretending everything has always been smooth sailing.

Appointment of the week

Solicitors Regulation Authority seeks director

The Solicitors Regulation Authority is seeking an executive director for market risk, data and insights.

As the regulator of solicitors and law firms in England and Wales, the SRA oversees more than 200,000 solicitors and 9,000 firms.

Reporting directly to the chief executive and as a member of the executive team, the appointee will provide strategic leadership across the market risk, data management, analytics, insight and research functions. The role will ensure that the SRA is intelligence-led, evidence-based and proactive in identifying and responding to emerging risks.

The postholder will oversee the development of advanced analytical and research capabilities, providing high-quality insight to inform priorities and performance.

The successful candidate will bring leadership experience gained within a regulator, regulated sector or similar complex environment, alongside a strong track record of leading market risk, data, insight, research or intelligence functions that informed organisational decision-making.

Apply by August 25 at appointments.thetimes.com

Working week

Mid-market youth rescue

Mid-market businesses could ease the youth unemployment crisis. Research from BDO, the advisory firm, shows 83 per cent are hiring for entry-level roles within the next six months, with 36 per cent recruiting for permanent entry-level positions that do not require a degree, while 32 per cent plan to take on entry-level graduates. Richard Austin, a BDO partner, said: "The mid-market already plays an outsize role in the UK labour market."

AI adding to workload

Artificial intelligence is supposed to speed up workplace efficiency, yet 88 per cent of British IT decision-makers say managing AI complexity has increased their team's workload. Freshworks, the software firm, found IT teams now spend about a quarter of their AI-related working time troubleshooting. The firm called it a "complexity tax", with a third of UK decision-makers saying AI complexity is "a very significant issue".

Raiding the office fridge

With more staff bringing in packed lunches to beat the cost of living crisis, theft from the office fridge is growing. One in five employees say they have had food or drinks stolen at work, a survey found, while one in ten admit to taking items from a shared office fridge that did not belong to them. Milk and dairy products are the items most likely to disappear, followed by snacks such as crisps, confectionery and chocolate.

Mentors for future leaders

A new professional development programme bridges the "readiness gap" between today's leaders and the next generation. Devised by the executive search firm Holmes Noble and MRA Executive Coaching, The Ascent brings together chief executives from FTSE and private businesses as founding mentors, enabling participants to learn through CEO lunches, panel discussions, boardroom simulations and podcasts.

Department of Health & Social Care

NDG National Data Guardian

The National Data Guardian for Health and Care

The Minister for Health Innovation and Safety is seeking an exceptional individual to serve as the next National Data Guardian (NDG) for Health and Care.

This is a unique opportunity to influence how health and care data is used across England at a pivotal moment for the NHS, social care and the wider health system. As advances in technology, data science and artificial intelligence continue to transform healthcare, the NDG plays a critical role in ensuring that innovation is underpinned by public trust, transparency and the highest standards of confidentiality and security.

The National Data Guardian is the independent champion for patients and the public on matters relating to the use, protection and sharing of health and adult social care information. The NDG provides trusted advice, guidance and challenge to government, the NHS, social care organisations and the wider health and care system, helping to ensure that confidential information is safeguarded while enabling its responsible use to improve services, patient outcomes and research.

Created in 2014 and established in law by the Health and Social Care (National Data Guardian) Act 2018, the role carries significant influence across the health and care landscape. The NDG has statutory powers to issue official guidance on the processing of health and adult social care data in England, to which public bodies and organisations delivering NHS and publicly funded adult social care services must have regard.

The successful candidate will provide visible national leadership on some of the most complex and important issues facing health and care today. They will engage with senior leaders across government, the NHS, social care, academia, industry and the voluntary sector, helping to shape policy and practice at a time when the opportunities presented by data have never been greater.

We are looking for a respected and influential leader with a strong track record of operating at a senior level and delivering impact in complex environments within the private, public or voluntary sectors. You will bring extensive experience of the secure and ethical use of sensitive health data, together with a deep understanding of the evolving technologies that underpin modern health and care services.

You will possess excellent judgement, independence and credibility, with the ability to influence, challenge and build consensus across a diverse range of stakeholders. Outstanding communication and interpersonal skills are essential, as is the ability to connect with patients and the public while engaging effectively with leaders across government and the health and care system.

Above all, you will be committed to ensuring that the responsible use of data improves outcomes for patients and citizens, while maintaining public confidence in how personal information is used and protected.

This is an exceptional opportunity to help shape the future of health and care data in England and make a lasting contribution to the wellbeing of citizens.

Remuneration will be £63,000 per annum for a time commitment of 3.5 days per week. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care determine the length of appointment, which may be for up to a maximum of 3 years.

For more information, please visit the Public Appointments website: https://apply-for-public-appointment.service.gov.uk/roles/9039

If you require an alternative format, please call Karen Dinsdale on 0113 254 5625 or Ben Jones on 0113 254 6557 quoting the reference VAC-9039.

The closing date for applications is midday on **Tuesday, 01 September 2026.**

The Department of Health and Social Care values and promotes diversity. We encourage applications from talented individuals from all backgrounds and across the whole of the United Kingdom. Boards of public bodies are most effective when they reflect the diversity of views of the society they serve.

Department of Health & Social Care

HTA

Chair – Human Tissue Authority (HTA)

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care is looking to appoint a new Chair of the Human Tissue Authority (HTA).

HTA is a statutory body which regulates organisations that remove, store and use human tissue for research, medical treatment, post-mortem examination, education and training, and display in public. It also oversees approval for living organ donation. Its overarching aim is to protect public and professional confidence in the safe and ethical use of human tissue.

As Chair of HTA you will be responsible for providing strategic leadership and challenge to ensure the HTA delivers its statutory functions effectively and aligns with Government priorities. Working closely with the Chief Executive and Authority members, they foster stakeholder confidence, oversee organisational performance and transformation, support member development, and advise DHSC on Authority effectiveness and performance.

Applicants will have a strong career track record of significant delivery and leadership at a senior level within the private, public or voluntary sectors. You will have the ability to lead the board of a national public body, delivering robust governance and accountability, and developing executive and board performance. You will have sound judgement, with an ability to critically analyse a wide range of information and make evidence-based, strategic decisions. You will have excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to lead an organisation through change and improvement.

The Chair cannot have or have had a professional interest in any of the kinds of activity within the remit of the Human Tissue Authority.

Remuneration will be £42,000 per annum for a time commitment of two to three days a week. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care will determine the length of appointment, which may be for up to a maximum of 3 years.

For more information, please visit the Public Appointments website: http://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/8833

If you require an alternative format please call Ralph Cabrega on 0113 254 5481 or Rachael Gingell on 0207 484 9424 quoting the reference VAC-8833..

The closing date for applications is midday on **Wednesday, 16 September 2026.**

The Department of Health and Social Care values and promotes diversity. We encourage applications from talented individuals from all backgrounds and across the whole of the United Kingdom. Boards of public bodies are most effective when they reflect the diversity of views of the society they serve.

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Lead TrustMark Through a Critical Next Chapter

Strategic Leadership | Commercial Resilience | Transformation | Stakeholder Confidence | Entrepreneurial & Commercially Astute

TRUSTMARK
Government Endorsed Quality

Are you ready to lead a purpose-driven national organisation through its next phase of growth, transformation and industry influence?

Do you combine commercial acumen with a genuine commitment to consumer protection, quality standards and long-term societal impact?

Can you inspire and empower senior leaders and colleagues, influence stakeholders at the highest levels, demonstrate an entrepreneurial approach, and balance public-interest objectives with commercial sustainability?

TrustMark is seeking an exceptional Chief Executive Officer to lead the organisation through a period of change, challenge and renewed focus.

This high-profile role calls for a commercially astute, credible and resilient leader who can balance public-interest responsibilities with commercial sustainability, strengthen organisational confidence and engage effectively with colleagues, partners, industry and government stakeholders.

About TrustMark
TrustMark is the only UK Government-endorsed quality scheme for home improvements ranging from kitchen and bathroom installations through to energy efficiency and low carbon measures and most things in-between.

As a not-for-profit organisation, TrustMark exists to drive quality, confidence and consumer protection across the industry while supporting the long-term development of a safer, more sustainable built environment.

Operating at the intersection of government, industry and consumers, TrustMark helps strengthen standards, improve trust and create positive outcomes across the home improvement, construction, energy efficiency and retrofit sectors.

As the UK continues to focus on housing quality, energy efficiency, consumer protection and retrofit delivery, TrustMark has a significant opportunity to strengthen its role as a trusted national scheme and industry partner.

We are now seeking a visionary, commercially minded and people-focused CEO to lead TrustMark forward, ensuring the organisation continues to deliver on its public-interest mission while building a resilient and financially sustainable future.

The Opportunity
Reporting to the Board, the CEO will lead TrustMark through its next challenging transformation and allow the individual to build and develop an exciting future for TrustMark.

This is a high-profile leadership role requiring a commercially minded and purpose-driven executive who can navigate complex stakeholder environments, drive organisational change and build long-term sustainability.

As TrustMark's principal ambassador, you will build trusted relationships across government, industry, regulators and commercial partners, ensuring the organisation remains influential, relevant and positioned for future growth.

This is an opportunity for a leader who can bring vision, pace and clarity, inspiring confidence internally while strengthening TrustMark's impact across the sector.

What You'll Be Responsible For:
Strategic Leadership and Direction
You will lead TrustMark's strategic evolution, working closely with the Board to shape a clear, ambitious and commercially sustainable future.

Commercial Growth and Financial Sustainability
You will drive the commercial agenda, strengthening TrustMark's financial position while protecting its purpose and credibility.

Executive Leadership and Culture
You will bring visible, energising leadership to the organisation, creating momentum and confidence through change.

Governance, Board Engagement and Risk
You will work effectively with an influential Board, combining strong executive leadership with sound governance and judgement.

External Leadership and Stakeholder Influence

You will act as TrustMark's principal ambassador, strengthening its voice, influence and reputation across the sector.

About You:
You will be a commercially astute, purpose-driven and transformational executive leader with the confidence, credibility and judgement to lead TrustMark through a significant period of change.

You may come from construction, retrofit, energy efficiency, home improvement, the wider built environment or another regulated, consumer-focused sector. Experience from financial services or another highly regulated environment may also be relevant, particularly where it has involved consumer protection, risk, compliance, digital platforms or public trust.

You will be entrepreneurial, practical and solutions-focused, with the ability to operate in a fluid policy and commercial environment. You will be comfortable with ambiguity, able to make decisions at pace and capable of balancing opportunity with appropriate governance and risk management.

Just as importantly, you will be a visible and people-focused leader who can generate energy, build confidence and bring people with you.

Naturally, whilst we'd be keen to speak to candidates from construction, retrofit, energy, home improvement, or the wider built environment sector, we're also excited to hear from leaders across all sectors

What You'll Bring
Essential:
- Proven CEO, MD or Executive leadership experience within a complex, multi-stakeholder environment
- A strong track record of leading transformation, growth and organisational change
- Commercially astute, with experience creating new revenue streams, partnerships or market opportunities
- Strong strategic, financial and operational leadership capability
- Experience working with influential boards and navigating complex governance environments
- An engaging leader who builds high-performing teams and drives accountability
- Exceptional stakeholder management, communication and influencing skills
- Resilient, adaptable and comfortable operating in fast-moving, evolving environments
- High levels of integrity, credibility and sound judgement

Leadership Style
We're looking for a leader who is:
- Visionary, commercially minded and entrepreneurial
- Confident, credible and able to inspire trust at every level
- A practical problem-solver who thrives in ambiguity and change
- Visible, engaging and people-focused
- Comfortable challenging constructively and driving transformation
- Passionate about developing talent and building organisational capability
- Motivated by purpose, impact and the opportunity to leave a lasting legacy

Why Join TrustMark?
This is a rare opportunity to lead a nationally recognised organisation at a pivotal moment in its evolution.
- Shape the future of trust, quality and consumer protection across the UK built environment
- Lead an organisation with significant influence across government, industry and regulatory stakeholders
- Capitalise on major opportunities in retrofit, energy efficiency and home improvement
- Drive commercial growth, digital transformation and long-term organisational sustainability
- Unlock the strategic value of unique data assets and emerging technologies
- Build and inspire a high-performing team through a period of ambitious change
- Create a lasting legacy in an organisation with genuine national impact

This is an exceptional opportunity for a visionary and commercially minded leader seeking a role where purpose and performance go hand in hand.

If you have the leadership presence, commercial acumen and ambition to shape TrustMark's next chapter, we'd love to hear from you.

Application Email: 20237.RR@applybe.com

Application notice... We take your privacy seriously. As you might expect you may be contacted by email, text or telephone. Your data is processed by our talent partner RR (Recruitment Revolution) on the basis of their legitimate interests in fulfilling the recruitment process. Please refer to their Data Privacy Policy & Notice on their website for further details.

Department of Health & Social Care

Chair - Adult Social Care Negotiating Body

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care is looking to appoint the first Chair of the Adult Social Care Negotiating Body (ASCNB). This is a new independent public body being set up by the Department of Health and Social Care. The Body will negotiate the first ever Fair Pay Agreement for the adult social care workforce and agreements thereafter on an annual basis.

The Chair will provide overall leadership of the ASCNB, building consensus among members and overseeing delivery of its annual programme to agreed timescales. They will act as the public and in-government representative, reporting to the Secretary of State and communicating key decisions to DHSC and the wider sector. The Chair will oversee the development and implementation of the Terms of Reference, ensuring effective governance and accountability. They will facilitate inclusive negotiations between trade unions and employer representatives on the ASCNB, to secure an affordable, sustainable agreement that improves pay and conditions, chairing meetings to ensure all perspectives, including local government, self-funders and the NHS, are considered.

As Chair you will have a strong career track record of significant delivery and leadership at a senior level within the private, public or voluntary sectors. You will have the ability to lead the board of a national public body, delivering robust governance and accountability, and developing executive and board performance. You will have sound judgement, with an ability to critically analyse a wide range of information and make evidence-based, strategic decisions. You will have excellent communication and interpersonal skills, and an understanding of the role of pay and reward in motivation, recruitment and retention amongst a workforce, and the constraints that can impact on pay awards. A knowledge and understanding of the adult social care system and/or experience of employment negotiations and industrial relations would be desirable.

Remuneration will be £550 per day for a time commitment of approximately 20 working days per year. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care will determine the length of appointment, which may be for up to a maximum of 3 years..

For more information, please visit the Public Appointments website: http://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/9406

If you require an alternative format, please call Karen Dinsdale on 0113 254 5625 or Rachael Gingell on 0207 4849424 quoting the reference VAC-9406..

The closing date for applications is midday on **Monday, 24 August 2026.**

The Department of Health and Social Care values and promotes diversity. We encourage applications from talented individuals from all backgrounds and across the whole of the United Kingdom. Boards of public bodies are most effective when they reflect the diversity of views of the society they serve.

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Obituaries

Abdul Ahad Momand

First and only Afghan sent into space in 1988 as a Soviet propaganda stunt in the last years of the USSR's war in his country

Abdul Ahad Momand was a young boy living in a village south of Kabul when Yuri Gagarin, the Soviet cosmonaut, travelled to Afghanistan to give a talk. It was 1961 and Gagarin was on an international goodwill tour after his historic Vostok 1 spaceflight that year. "In his speech, he said: 'There will come a day, not far away, when an Afghan will travel to space'," recalled Momand. "If someone had told me then, 'You'll be the first Afghan in space', I wouldn't believe them, because at that time it wasn't possible."

That Momand went to space almost three decades later, in 1988 — the first and only Afghan to do so, three years before Britain's first astronaut, Helen Sharman — was a quirk of Cold War politics. Sending Momand on the Soyuz TM-6 spacecraft alongside the Soviet commander Vladimir Lyakhov and the doctor Valery Polyakov was something of a propaganda stunt in the closing acts of a gruelling, deeply unpopular war between the Afghan mujahidin and the USSR, then headed by Mikhail Gorbachev. The Geneva Accords in April that year had mandated that the Soviet Union withdraw all its troops from Afghanistan, almost a decade after arriving there, but they continued to support Mohammad Najibullah's puppet government by sending guns, money and, in a symbolic gesture, an Afghan up to space.

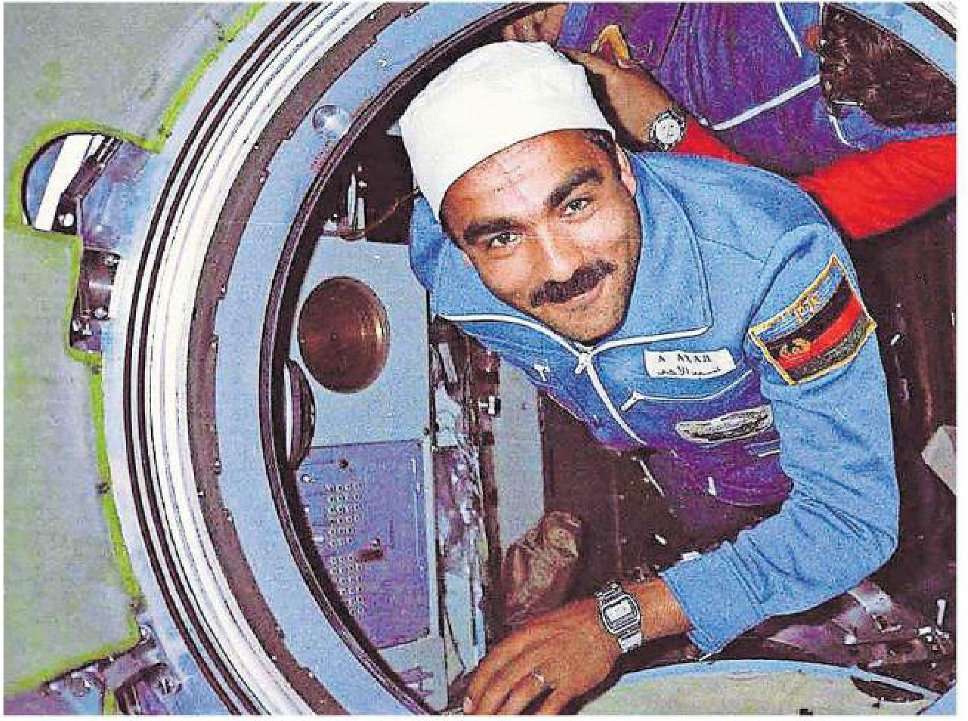
Momand was a pilot with the Afghan air force when in 1987 the Soviet Union and the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan made a deal under the Interkosmos programme, a Soviet initiative that launched pilots from socialist states in the eastern bloc, as well as allies including Cuba, Vietnam and Syria. The space race between America and the USSR had, by the 1980s, morphed into a theatre for soft power and alliance-building.

Momand applied straight away. The selection committee were looking for highly skilled pilots with Soviet-style training who had proven themselves loyal in combat; Momand had doggedly fought the mujahidin and trained at specialised aviation academies near Moscow and in Kyiv. He was selected out of some 400 applicants, beating his closest rival, Mohammad Dauran, who held higher rank and had stronger political ties, partly because Dauran suddenly got appendicitis. "I did not have any acquaintances in the government or the politburo," Momand said. "I was a simple army officer."

The mission was supposed to take place the following year, but launching Momand into space was tied up in the delicate timing of the war and they wanted him off the ground before withdrawing Soviet troops completely. The preparation for the mission lasted just six months — a fraction of the amount of time usually required — but on August 29, 1988, the cosmonauts left Kazakhstan in a rocket headed for Mir, the world's first continuously inhabited space station 230 miles above Earth.

Over the nine-day mission, Momand took photographs of remote areas of his country to determine which regions were rich with natural resources of oil and gas — USSR officials said it was designed to boost the Afghan economy — as well as areas prone to earthquakes.

ROSCOSMOS



Momand inside the Mir space station in 1988 and, left, alongside his fellow cosmonaut Vladimir Lyakhov, with whom he formed a close friendship, founded on shared humour

Momand had grown up with no accurate map of Afghanistan and later spoke about how the spaceflight helped him to draw one.

Up in space, he felt a considerable weight on his shoulders, a responsibility "on behalf of Afghanistan and the Afghan people", he said. "As an Afghan I was going to space to represent them and I felt that." As a fighter pilot he had been loyal to the Afghan government, and by proxy the Soviets, but once in orbit he decided to turn his historic mission into a plea for peace, triggered in part by the beauty and harmony of Earth as seen from the small porthole of the Mir.

In a phone call with President Najibullah, broadcast on state-run Soviet TV in Momand's native Pashto, he urged his fellow countrymen to stop fighting one another. "Take your neighbour by the hand, lay down your arms," he said. "Let's solve our problems through dialogue." From his vantage point, he later reflected, the violence carving up Afghanistan was invisible: "My message to all peoples, nations and Afghans was, 'I see a peaceful Afghanistan from this height, and with the naked eye I can't see a tank.'"

At the request of the Afghan government, Momand also read a prayer from the Quran, the first person to do so from space. The move was partly to signal that the government was not atheist and anti-Islamic, as the mujahidin fighters often tried to claim. "Ahad put on a skullcap to do it," recalled his crewmate Vladimir Lyakhov in an interview with the BBC in 2014. "He was being filmed from below, and I was just out of the shot, hanging on to his legs to stop him floating off."

The pair struck up a close friendship, founded on shared humour; Lyakhov recalled how they would spend their 90 minutes on the exercise bike looking out of the small window: "Someone said, 'Look we're just flying over Canada, so if you keep going until Canada comes round again, then you'll have done a complete circuit.'"

The friendly rapport came in handy when, on their return home, intense sunlight caused a computer glitch and the two cosmonauts had to abort their first attempt to re-enter the atmosphere. Polyakov remained on the station for another 240 days. They were suspended in space for a nailbiting 25 hours, confined to a cramped compartment with no food and water, depleting oxygen supplies and no way of going to the bathroom. The men passed the time telling each other jokes.

Momand recalled that they had been "exactly two seconds away" from being permanently marooned in space: a second computer malfunction resulted in a 60-second countdown to jettison the fuel and batteries needed to transport them back to Earth. He had been trained not to disturb Lyakhov in flight, but when Momand noticed the countdown he pointed it out to Lyakhov, who quickly stopped it.

When the pair finally returned to the Earth on September 7, 1988, they were sanguine. "It was nothing in particular, just a normal descent," said the mild-mannered, moustachioed Momand while sitting outside their capsule, swarmed by reporters. "We were in autopilot, there was some g-force. We had to wait for 24 hours, but it happens." To his commander, Momand said with a smile, "Don't fly for a fourth time. Allah won't forgive you for it."

Back in Afghanistan, Momand was treated to a hero's welcome. Najibullah's government highlighted his mission as an example of national unity during the troop withdrawal, which concluded in February 1989, and he was awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union and the Order of Lenin, the highest honours for Soviet cosmonauts.

Afghanistan's government awarded him the equivalent honour, but the day Momand returned to Kabul a barrage of rockets hit the city. Withdrawing Soviet troops did little to assuage the violence that would besiege the country for many years to come, and though Momand briefly served as the deputy minister of civil aviation, when the Soviet-backed government finally collapsed in 1992 — and Islamic mujahidin groups began crowding in — he sought political asylum in Germany, where he remained. As one of the most famous faces of the communist era, Momand would have been a target.

Momand was born in 1959 into a peasant family living in Sardeh Band, a town in the Ghazni Province, 100 miles south of Kabul (according to the Daily Telegraph, he never knew his birthday and there are no official records). As a boy he had dreams of becoming a pilot. "Sometimes planes would appear overhead," he said, "and I would think how great it would be if I could fly."

Afghanistan was then in a period of relative stability and progress, ruled by a constitutional monarch, King Mohammad Zahir Shah, who ushered in what is often called the country's "golden age". When Momand moved to Kabul aged 16 it was a liberal, cosmopolitan city; after high school he attended the capital's polytechnic university.

After the Soviet-aligned People's Democratic party seized power in 1978, Momand was drafted into the army. He received aviation training in the Soviet Union before joining the air force as a fighter pilot in 1981 after the USSR had invaded Afghanistan to prop up the ailing communist regime. Most of his missions in the 1980s involved airstrikes against mujahidin insurgents.

In time he was promoted to the rank of captain and chief navigator at Bagram Air Base. It was there that he met his wife, Zulfara, the daughter of one of his senior officers. They had two daughters and a son. All survive him.

When Momand and his family first moved to Germany, he found work at the Institute for Cosmological Research at the University of Stuttgart. He later worked in printing and as an accountant. "The former cosmonaut and pilot never managed to get back into his old profession; he now does a job that does not excite him, one he even refuses to talk about," wrote Daniel Schäfer in the Financial Times in 2011. "In his tidy house, only a painted picture depicting the cosmos, a poster about a conference in the early 1990s on outer space in Norway and a small metal model of a Soyuz TM aluminium capsule act as a reminder of a long-gone life."

Afghanistan also seemed long gone, though Momand remained a respected figure in his native country. He returned just once in 2013, on the 25th anniversary of the space mission, when he was met by President Karzai and read aloud the same message of peace he had decades earlier.

After he died, his remains were repatriated to Kabul, where officials in the de facto Taliban government held a public funeral and celebrated his historic 1988 mission as an enduring symbol of national achievement.

"Looking down on the Earth, I felt so honoured to live there," said Momand in a BBC World Service documentary in 2020. "It's so beautiful."

Abdul Ahad Momand, cosmonaut, was born in 1959. He died of cancer on June 21, 2026, aged 66 or 67

Lord Laming

Former social services inspector whose inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié ultimately led to the Children Act 2004

Lord Laming opened his report on the Victoria Climbié inquiry with a quote from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*: "I have suffered too much grief in setting down these heart-rending memories. If I try to describe him, it is to make sure that I shall not forget him."

It was Laming's hope that the painstakingly assembled 400-page report would prevent the world from forgetting Victoria and what was done to her. Certainly, he never would. "The pain of what happened to Victoria is always present," he said. "The missed opportunities and the failure to protect her was something that weighed incredibly with me."

Originally from Ivory Coast, Victoria was eight when she died after months of torture and abuse by her great-aunt and her great-aunt's boyfriend. The details of the case were appalling: Victoria had been starved, beaten and bound in bags full of excrement by her supposed caregivers. She died of hypothermia and multiple organ failure in 2000.

What particularly disturbed Laming, who had previously served as chief inspector of the Social Services Inspectorate, was that in the months preceding Victoria's death the state had been given every opportunity to save her. "Victoria was not hidden away," he said. She was known to three housing authorities, four social services departments, two police child protection teams, an NSPCC centre and two hospitals. "The dreadful reality was that these services knew little or nothing more about Victoria at the end of the process than they did when she was first referred," Laming wrote. Haringey social services had formally closed Victoria's case on the very day she died.

Laming was appointed to lead the government inquiry into Victoria's death in 2001. What followed was the most extensive investigation of Britain's child protection systems in the country's history and the first to simultaneously investigate the roles of social services, the NHS and the police.

The inquiry determined that at least 12 crucial opportunities to save Victoria had been missed. In his assessment, Laming urged that blame be directed not towards the "often hapless" frontline workers but towards those who had left them underfunded, undertrained and understaffed. From his own background in probation, he knew what the front lines of social care were like: "It is very demanding work, it is tough work and therefore the staff need to be specially trained to do that work."

Laming's final report made 108 recommendations, many of which were then introduced into law by the Children Act 2004. It led to the establishment of a children's commissioner in England and local safeguarding children's boards across England and Wales, as well as "Every Child Matters", Labour's child protection and welfare programme. "The best we can hope for from the terrible ordeal suffered by Victoria, who was brought to this country for a better life, is that this report is the last of its kind," Laming said.

Laming's inquiry revealed that at least 12 chances to save Victoria were missed

This wish, sadly, was not granted. In 2008 Laming was asked to produce a review of his report in light of the death of the 17-month-old Peter Connelly. Peter, referred to by the press as "Baby P", had been seen at least 60 times by social workers, doctors and police before he was found dead in his cot.

Laming's review noted that many of the legislative changes spurred by his 2003 report had failed to trickle down to the front lines of social care. "We're very good at producing legislation — miles of legislation," Laming said. "I think we are not good at ensuring that that legislation is taken forward and implemented at a local level. If it doesn't make a difference on a housing estate in Preston, what's the point of it?"

SHUTTERSTOCK EDITORIAL

A memorial to Baby P. In the light of his death, Laming, right, was asked to review his 2003 Victoria Climbié report

William Herbert Laming was born in Newcastle in 1936 to William and Lillian (née Robson) Laming. After leaving school at 15 without qualifications, he worked odd jobs and undertook his National Service with the Royal Navy. One afternoon, while Laming was returning to his ship after a period of leave, his train broke down and he got talking to the man sitting next to him, a senior magistrate on his way to a probation committee meeting. A few weeks later, Laming received a letter inviting him to meet a chief probation officer (CPO) to whom he had been recommended.

Under the guidance of this CPO, and others "committed to social mobility", Laming enrolled in a series of correspondence courses and evening classes, and was eventually admitted into Durham University, where he earned a diploma in applied social studies in 1960. The following year he took a job as a probation officer in Nottinghamshire.

Laming fondly recalled one of his earliest cases: an inarticulate 17-year-old who, after sitting through numerous parole meetings in silence, suddenly revealed a remarkable talent for arithmetic. Laming found him a job at a supermarket warehouse, where he amazed the managers. "He will never know how much he taught me," Laming admitted. "We must never be satisfied taking things at face value, never be satisfied with writing people off."

Laming was hastened up the parole office's hierarchy by his CPO. At first, he tried turning the promotions down. "I'd tell him I wasn't suited to do that work, and he'd ask if I was doubting his professional judgment," Laming recalled. "'Good heavens, no,' I'd reply, and I'd be told to get on with it."

In 1971 he moved to Hertfordshire and four years later he was promoted to director of social services for the county. In 1991 he joined the Department of Health as chief inspector of the Social Services Inspectorate, a role from which he retired in 1998. He took a life peerage the same year, having been appointed CBE in 1985 and knighted in 1996. He served as convener of the crossbench peers from 2011 to 2015. In 1962 he married Aileen Pollard, who died in 2010.

In the years following the Victoria Climbié inquiry and its 2008 review, Laming was dismayed to see some of his recommendations and reforms dismantled by the government's austerity programme, including the Every Child Matters framework. Increasingly, agencies were abandoning preventative measures and becoming crisis-driven services. "Sometimes, frankly, it's too late then," he said. In 2025 he confessed he found it difficult to read about new cases that resembled those of Victoria and Peter. "In recent years I've tried to resist reading them because I find them dispiriting," Laming said. "That might seem rather cowardly."

Nonetheless, Laming continued pushing for safer futures for children and offering guidance on how they might be achieved. "The greatest thing one has is an ability to listen, to see, to observe," he told an interviewer in 2020. "This is the model that I think we've got to have going forward: to break down the silos, break down the organisational boundaries and say we're interested in this human being, this family, these children." Despite its difficulties, and its exacting emotional toll, he never regretted the path his career had taken. "I would absolutely do it again," he said. "My career has given me more than I have been able to give it."

Lord Laming, social worker, was born on July 19, 1936. He died on July 15, 2026, aged 89

Glen Hansard

Irish singer who achieved overnight screen fame and won an Oscar for Once but wrestled with the trappings of stardom

When Alan Parker arrived in Dublin in 1990 to cast his film based on Roddy Doyle's novel *The Commitments* about a young Irish soul group of the same name, he auditioned 64 bands at ten-minute intervals in the Waterfront nightclub on the Liffey quays.

He had somewhat rashly announced that he would "consider anyone who sang or played a musical instrument" — which turned out to include half of Dublin. To keep his word he ran an open audition to which more than 1,500 young Dubliners turned up "singing and playing everything from guitars to tin whistles, banjos to bagpipes".

By the end Parker calculated that he had seen more than 3,000 hopefuls and from this vast army of talent emerged a ten-strong band consisting of four singers and six instrumentalists, among them Glen Hansard as Outspan Foster, the Commitments' lead guitarist.

Once the cast was in place, Hansard and his bandmates spent five weeks being put through their paces, with dramatic rehearsals in the mornings and music rehearsals in the afternoons. When Parker had drilled them to his satisfaction, the film took 53 days to shoot at 44 locations around Dublin.

Released in 1991, *The Commitments* went on to win four Bafta awards and a Brit award for best soundtrack. The film was nominated by Parker as his personal favourite in a glittering directorial filmography that included *Mississippi Burning*, *Midnight Express* and *Evita*.

But Hansard was more equivocal. Although the film put him on the map, he felt it a two-edged sword. A former busker, by the time he was cast as Outspan, he had already formed his own band, the Frames, who were building a following in Dublin's pubs and clubs and had been signed by Island Records.

He feared his screen character and the soul music covers he played in the film were blotting out the music he was making in real life, and he resented it. "When I went to England on my first tours people were saying, 'You're Outspan in *The Commitments*,' " he said, looking back on the occasion of the film's 25th anniversary. "I was like, 'Well, f*** Outspan and *The Commitments* — I'm here to play my music.'"

"We all felt a little burnt by the experience of too much, too young," he said. "I witnessed not only myself but my dear friends kind of go off their rocker a little bit."

He eventually rediscovered his equilibrium and went on to record seven albums with the Frames, touring with the band as Bob Dylan's support act and in 2022 playing a 30th anniversary concert, somewhat delayed by Covid, in front of 10,000 fans in Dublin. He also released several solo albums.

After his misgivings about *The Commitments* he needed some persuading to agree to return to the screen for the 2007 drama *Once* alongside a teenaged Czech singer, Marketa Irglova, as a pair of struggling musicians in Dublin.

But the director John Carney, once of the Frames, won him round with the promise of allowing Hansard, along with Irglova, to provide the music, including the song *Falling Slowly*, which they had co-written and was recorded for the Frames' 2006 album *The Cost*.

The film was a low-budget triumph, winning the World Cinema Audience Award at the Sundance Festival while *Falling Slowly* won the Academy Award for best original song. *Once* was also adapted into a Broadway musical, winning eight Tony awards, although neither Hansard nor Irglova reprised their roles.

Once again, though, Hansard recoiled from fame after his Oscar. "You'd imagine I'd have been full of light after winning but I went quite dark, drinking far too much," he said.

Hansard performing at Dublin Castle in 2002

Bruce Springsteen put him straight one night which they spent drinking whisky. "He said that everything I had ever been in my life — that guy struggling against the world — had died the night we won the Oscar," Hansard remembered. "I was in a different part of my life, a different suit and he said I should learn to embrace it and enjoy it."

While shooting *Once*, Carney called Hansard and Irglova his "Bogart and Bacall" and predicted they would become an item, which they duly did. "I had been falling in love with her for a long time, but I kept telling myself she's just a kid," said Hansard, who had known her since she was 13. "There was definitely the feeling making the film that we were documenting something precious and private."

They had recorded an album together, *The Swell Season*, which included a version of *Falling Slowly* and several other songs that appeared in *Once*. Irglova moved in to Hansard's Dublin flat, although by 2009 he reported they were merely "good friends".

In 2022 he married Maire Saaritsa, a Finnish poet who survives him along with their three-year-old son, Christy.

Glen James Hansard was born in 1970 in Dublin, the second of six children to Catholic parents, Catherine (née Cahill) and James Hansard. Before his teens he was "getting into trouble — drinking, glue, the usual stuff" and quit school to become a busker, seemingly with the approval of his headmaster. "He guaranteed me that, while I might not become a rock star, if I stuck at it, I'd likely make a living from it," Hansard recalled. "That was his job, he said — to help me make a living."

A former altar boy, while busking he was befriended by devotees of the Hare Krishna temple and considered joining them. His devotion to music won out but he continued to support their faith.

He also stayed close to his roots and every year he led the Christmas Eve charity busk outside Gaiety Theatre in Dublin to raise funds for the homeless.

Glen Hansard, Irish singer-songwriter and guitarist, was born on April 21, 1970. He died in a motorcycle accident on July 29, 2026, aged 56

Lives remembered

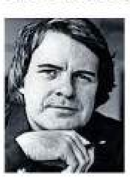
Sir Edwin Jowitt

David Hacking writes: A long time ago I was Edwin Jowitt's pupil at the Bar (obituary, July 26). I remember so well first hearing him in court. It was in January 1963 at the Aylesbury assizes. He was making a plea in mitigation. He spoke so confidently and so well. As I later witnessed on many occasions as his pupil, he was a supreme advocate and a careful but brilliant crossexaminer.

It was therefore surprising later to learn from him that he had to conquer his nerves before being in court. Indeed he described to me, as a young advocate, being physically ill when going to court.

I learnt so much from him.

Ian Kennedy Martin



Dr Peter B Baker writes: During the 1970s, as a forensic scientist I worked alongside many officers of HM Customs and Excise, a fairly hard-bitten lot. Many times they stated that *The Sweeney*, created by Ian Kennedy Martin (obituary, July 30), was an accurate portrait of serious crime squads.

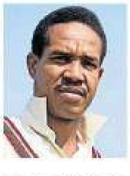
Sir Ian Wood

Peter Mackay writes: Your obituary of Sir Ian Wood (July 28) understates his massive achievements in business, public life and philanthropy. It was in his public life that I got to know him, when I was working in the Scottish Office. He was a tireless ambassador, and sometimes thorn in our flesh, for Aberdeen and the North Sea oil industry and was successful in persuading Whitehall to relocate part of the Offshore Supplies Office to Aberdeen in the late 1980s.

He chaired the government's main Scottish development agency, Scottish Enterprise, from 1997 to 2000, and led a UK government-sponsored review of the future of the oil reserves on the UK continental shelf in 2013 (the Wood Review). The Conservative government accepted all its recommendations and committed itself to full implementation of them.

Through the Wood Charitable Foundation, he and his wife have given away tens of millions to education, the arts, the NHS and the city of Aberdeen and are significant art collectors. To add to all that, he played rugby for the north of Scotland against the Springboks in 1969. He truly was a man for all seasons.

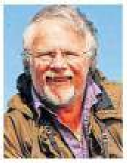
Sir Garfield Sobers



Mark Pyper writes: My experience of the willingness of Garry Sobers (obituary, July 17) to sign autographs was very different from that of Simon Brewer (Lives remembered, July 22). The first match of the 1963 West Indies tour was a friendly encounter against LC Stevens' XI at the Saffrons ground in Eastbourne. Not only could we schoolboys rub shoulders and gather autographs, we were allowed to bowl at our idols in the nets. When Sobers went out to bat, I rose from my kneeling position on the boundary and asked, more in distant hope than expectation, if I might take his photograph.

The world's leading all-rounder did not hesitate at this important moment, turning round to respond positively and generously to a 15-year-old boy.

Bill Oddie



Adrian Mallen writes: I am grateful to Robert Thompson (Lives Remembered, July 30) for drawing readers' attention to the wonderful recording by Bill Oddie (obituary, July 27) of *On Ilkla Moor Baht 'at*.

I might add that this record, issued on John Peel's Dandelion label, is in fact a spoof of the famous Joe Cocker version of *With A Little Help From My Friends*, and was recorded using most of Cocker's backing band and singers.

The cost of the recording was so great that, as Peel later admitted, it almost bankrupted Dandelion right at the outset.

But it was worth it.

▸ If you would like to add a personal view or recollection to a published obituary, you can send your contribution by email to **tributes@thetimes.co.uk**

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Call to the Bar

The following were called to the Bar this Trinity term by Inner Temple:
Kateryna Cutler, Esther Ojo, Beenish Fawad, Nathan Thompson, Clishae Lauren Sands, Matthew Johnson, Nasteha Jama, Nisha Kumari Joshi, Sharon Chisom Ozioma Uche, Oravara Ratanakorn, Stella Louise Higham, Richard William Frederick Dobbs, Grace Emily Mitchell, Robert Arjun Nayagam, Meysam Rajaee, Johnson Adedoja Akombi Nanasegu Adewopo, Osarieme Sharon Ebikueluye, Louis O'Connor, Charles Alexander James Lapinskas, Chaudhry Muhammad Fahad, Mary Emamezi Adekanye, Patrick Alastair Kenny, Reisha Nerissa Davids, Owen Samuel McCrea, Ahadur Rahman Souad, Emma Brookley Hilder-South, Benedict Adam Springbett, Chloe Alysia Brookes, Ellie Blackburn, Anaya Nailah Price, Simran Chard, Navjothi Raju, Ruby Mae Wallis, Mahin Rahman Monami, Acacia Adela Williams-Hewitt, Christopher William Wiskin, Joshua Connor Hurst, Charlotte Grace Warren, Rebecca Ebner-Landy, Christine Miculyn Thomas Logijin, William Robert Danson Poole, Kate Louise Grimsdale, Farida Elsheikh, Anton Konshin, Boris Momchilov Krastev, Stephen Hare, Jovana Koprivica, Kirsty Anne Pumfrey Cooper, Thomas Stephen Crutchley, Clara Jacques, Iqra Hussain, Luke Marsden, Hadi Rachrach, Sheikh Fazle Nashwan, Charlotte Thelma-Rose Rodney, Sheikh Fazle Nawar, Emily Georgia Evans, Mohd Haziq Bin Mohd Shahril, Daniel Jacob, Frankie Shepley, Amelia-Jo Sharp-Saxby, Madeleine West-Nelson, Albert Cammack, Jaymie Elizabeth Burns, Hannah Pryor, Debbie Ru Shan Tan, Xin Ying Ang, Lara Canivari Gouveia Gaspar Gomes, Jawad Razzaq Khan, Agnes Chan Yeh Loke, Amelia Constance Bradley, Freya Holly Walker, William Parr, John Whitcomb, Man Ya Koh, Megan Bradley, Clara Olivia Nine Brown, Mia Katja Hodge, Nisha Abraham, Joseph Oliver Stone, Nathan Newnham, Muhil Logandran, Tegan Amy Bennett, Courtney McCarthy, Shakaya Tafari , Eleanor Rebecca Griffin, Leah Khalid Rahman, Upama Nandy, Rabi Haruna, James Christopher Ashton, Eryn Niamh Cowell, Lauren Holtham-Morgan, Edward Michael Bray, Sheikh Mosfeq Kabir, Maia Anna Oleksy, Suranga Bandara Wijeyasiri Weeraparakrama Mahapa Jayalath, Siddharth S. Aatreya, Stephen Cox, Bakshi Mohit, Noel Joseph Travers, Duane Andrew Roy Allen, Nosib Kayser, Jessine Piong, Kaylene Leong Jia Yin, Yash Jangid.

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THE TIMES

LIVES BEHIND THE SILVER SCREEN

Court Circular

Buckingham Palace
30th July, 2026
By command of The King, Mr Alistair Harrison (Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps) called upon Her Excellency Ms Laura Camila Sarabia Torres at 76 Chester Square, London SW1, this afternoon in order to bid farewell to Her Excellency upon relinquishing her appointment as Ambassador from the Republic of Colombia to the Court of St James's.

St James's Palace
30th July, 2026
The Duke of Edinburgh, Vice-Patron, Commonwealth Sport, and The Duchess of Edinburgh today attended the XXIII Commonwealth Games and were received by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of the City of Glasgow (Councillor Jacqueline McLaren, the Rt Hon the Lord Provost).

St James's Palace
30th July, 2026
The Princess Royal, accompanied by Vice-Admiral Sir Tim Laurence, today attended the XXIII Commonwealth Games and was received by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of the City of Glasgow (Councillor Jacqueline McLaren, the Rt Hon the Lord Provost).

Kensington Palace
30th July, 2026
The Duke of Kent, Patron, London Philharmonic Orchestra, this afternoon attended a performance of 'Billy Budd' by Benjamin Britten at Glyndebourne Festival, Glyndebourne, Lewes, East Sussex.

Births, Marriages and Deaths

To book a Birth, Marriage or Death announcement in the Register, visit: newsukadvertising.co.uk
for help, please call 020 7782 7553
or email BMDs@thetimes.co.uk

IF then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
Colossians 3.1 (ESV)
Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Forthcoming Marriages

**MR J. A. FOORD
AND MISS F. E. LEADLEY**
The engagement is announced between James, son of Professors John and Allyson Foord of Cumnor, Oxford and Flora, daughter of Mr John and Mrs Amanda Leadley of Barnsbury, London.

Deaths

LAING Joan OBE, passed away peacefully on 9th July 2026, aged 94. Wife of the late Peter; much-loved mother of Sally, Daphne, Caroline and Richard; devoted grandmother and soon-to-be great-grandmother. Appointed OBE in 2001 for services to the British Red Cross, with which she served for 64 years. Funeral at All Saints' Church, Brill, Buckinghamshire, on Friday 28th August at 11am. Donations, if desired, to the British Red Cross.

LEWIN David Charles Pearman. Passed away peacefully on 18th July 2026, aged 79. Beloved husband of Melanie, devoted father of Anna and Helen, grandpa to Lottie, Joey, Jacob, Coco, Sam and Reuben and brother of Gill and Hillary. A lifelong sailing enthusiast, classic car fanatic and rarely without a smile. He will be deeply missed by his family and friends. A service of thanksgiving will be held at All Saints' Church, East Meon, later in the year.

MCNALLY Patrick Sean died peacefully at home on Wednesday 22nd July 2026. Much-loved father and grandfather. Private funeral. No flowers please.

MORRISS Hugo Henry died peacefully on 18th July 2026, aged 86. Now reunited with his beloved Maya. He will be greatly missed by his sisters, nephews, nieces and many friends. Private funeral and a celebration of his life in September. Details from Southgate of Newmarket, 01638 662480.

MUNRO Serena (née Ludovici) on 23rd July 2026, aged 63, at Southmead Hospital. Beloved wife of Bruce, and much-loved mother of Millie, Florrie, Tink and Tom. Our little sunshine girl will be loved and greatly missed by all who knew her. A private family funeral will take place. A service celebrating Serena's life will be held at a later date. No flowers please; donations, if desired, to the Dorothy House Firefly appeal.

In Memoriam - Private

IN MEMORIAM John Vernon Chelsom. March 1933 - July 2025. Still loved, still missed.

LEGAL, PUBLIC, COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES

To place notices for these sections please call 020 7782 7553

Notices are subject to confirmation and should be received by 11.30am three days prior to insertion

Legal Notices

**JAGJIT KAUR
(Recognition order)**
Notice is hereby given that it is ordered that the involuntary bankruptcy proceeding under Chapter 7 of the US Bankruptcy Code pursuant to a petition filed on 15 October 2025 in which on 19 November 2025 an order for relief was granted and Alfred T. Giuliano was appointed as trustee of the estate of the debtor, Jagjit Kaur, be recognised as a foreign main proceeding in accordance with the Uncitral Model Law on cross-border insolvency as set out in Schedule 1 to the Cross-Border Insolvency Regulations 2006. The order was made on 20 July 2026 and Mr Giuliano of 7 Savoy Court, London WC2R 0EX is the foreign representative (reference 337362/01).

**CLAIM NO. CR-2026-005577
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
BUSINESS AND PROPERTY COURTS OF
ENGLAND AND WALES, COMPANIES COURT (ChD)
IN THE MATTER OF
BUILT ENVIRONMENT GROUP LIMITED
(Company Number 10266950)
AND
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2006**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on 22 July 2026 Built Environment Group Limited whose registered office at 18 Northgate, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 7BJ (the Company) has presented a claim to the High Court of Justice seeking confirmation of a reduction of the Company's share capital by the cancellation of 10,000 C Ordinary shares of £0.01 each in the issued share capital of the Company.

AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the Claim is directed to be heard before an Insolvency and Companies Court Judge at 10.30 a.m. or as soon thereafter as it can be heard on 11 August 2026 in the High Court of Justice, Business and Property Court, Companies Court, 7 Rolls Buildings, Fetter Lane, London EC4A 1NL.

Any creditor or shareholder of the Company or other person whose interests may be affected by the proposed reduction of capital and who wishes to oppose the claim should appear at the hearing either in person or by legal representative.

A copy of the claim form and supporting documents may be obtained on request from the Company's solicitors.

Dated 27 July 2026

Roythornes LLP (ref PAS), East West, Tollhouse Hill, Nottingham, NG1 5FS

**Notice under section 27 of
the Trustee Act 1925
THE TYROLIT PENSION SCHEME
(the "Scheme")**

Notice is hereby given pursuant to section 27 of the Trustee Act 1925 (as amended) that the Scheme commenced winding-up on 31 May 2026.

The Trustees have taken all reasonable steps to contact the members and beneficiaries of the Scheme for whom they have records. An announcement has been sent to those members and beneficiaries and their benefits under the Scheme have been identified.

If you have not already received the announcement from the Trustees and you believe you may be entitled to benefits from the Scheme, please provide written details of your claim (specifying your full name, address and any particulars of your claim and a copy of any documentation that support your claim) to:

The Trustees of the Tyrolit Pension Scheme, c/o XPS Group, PO Box 562, Middlesbrough, TS1 9JA.
Email address: admin.edinburgh@xpsgroup.com

All claims must be received no later than 30 September 2026. After this time, the Trustees will proceed with the winding-up of the Scheme and the distribution of its assets having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have received prior notice and the Trustees shall not be liable in respect of any claims, entitlements or interests which have not been so notified to them.

Issued for and on behalf of the Trustees of
the Tyrolit Pension Scheme.
31 July 2026

**CR-2026-004801
IN THE HIGH COURT
OF
JUSTICE
BUSINESS AND PROPERTY
COURTS
OF
ENGLAND AND WALES
COMPANIES COURT (ChD)
IN THE MATTER
OF
JPMORGAN CHINA
GROWTH & INCOME PLC
AND
IN THE MATTER
OF
THE COMPANIES ACT 2006**

Notice is hereby given that a Part 8 Claim Form was, on 17 July 2026, issued by the above-named company (company number 02853893 with its registered office at 60 Victoria Embankment, London, EC4Y 0JP) (the Company) at the High Court of Justice, Chancery Division seeking an order confirming the cancellation of the entire amount standing to the credit of the Company's share premium account and capital redemption reserve (the Cancellation) which was approved by a special resolution of the Company passed on 3 February 2026.

Notice is further given that the final hearing of the claim as set out in the Part 8 Claim Form is directed to be heard before an Insolvency and Companies Court Judge at The Rolls Building, 7 Rolls Buildings, Fetter Lane, London, EC4A 1NL on 11 August 2026 at 10:30am.

Any creditor or shareholder of the Company wishing to oppose the making of an order to confirm the Cancellation should appear at the time of the hearing in person or by counsel for that purpose. A copy of the Part 8 Claim Form may be obtained, on payment of the regulated charge, from the Company's solicitors:
Walker Morris LLP,
33 Wellington Street, Leeds,
LS1 4DL
(ref: TAB/KIW/JPM06646.1).
Dated: Friday 31st July

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The voyage also includes a call to the elegant city of Lisbon, where charming cobbled streets, historic landmarks and impressive waterfront views await.

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Arrecife, Lanzarote

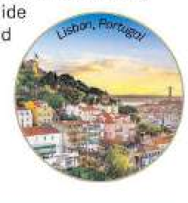
Santa Cruz, Tenerife

Las Palmas, Gran Canaria

Agadir, Morocco

Casablanca, Morocco

Modern, vibrant and boasting a fascinating history and heritage, it offers some incredible contrasts. Racing traffic whizzes by a backdrop of wide boulevards, parks and streets lined with a unique blend of French-Colonial and Moroccan style architecture



Lisbon, Portugal

Tangier, Morocco

Lisbon, Portugal

Arrive in Southampton

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Today Warm and mostly dry in England and Wales. Showers in Scotland and Ireland. Max 27C (81F), min 7C (45F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder *=previous day **=data not available

	Temp C midday yesterday		Rain mm 24 hrs to 5pm yesterday	Sun hr*
Aberdeen	19	R	4.2	0.0
Aberporth	17	S	3.0	2.6
Anglesey	18	PC	2.4	5.3
Aviemore	15	R	0.2	0.5
Barnstaple	19	C	0.2	**
Bedford	25	C	0.0	**
Belfast	16	C	1.0	3.2
Birmingham	17	R	0.8	**
Bournemouth	24	C	0.0	14.3
Bridlington	22	C	0.0	**
Bristol	23	PC	0.4	12.9
Camborne	15	R	3.0	5.5
Cardiff	21	C	0.0	12.7
Edinburgh	17	PC	3.4	0.9
Eskdalemuir	16	PC	3.6	0.0
Glasgow	17	R	5.0	1.5
Hereford	21	C	0.0	**
Herstmonceux	26	PC	0.0	12.1
Ipswich	27	C	0.0	13.9
Isle of Man	18	PC	0.0	0.8
Isle of Wight	25	S	0.0	**
Jersey	21	C	0.0	13.2
Keswick	17	C	1.0	**
Kinloss	16	**	0.0	3.5
Leeds	19	PC	0.2	**
Lerwick	12	R	4.2	8.1
Leuchars	20	C	2.4	0.0
Lincoln	21	C	0.0	12.6
Liverpool	19	PC	0.4	**
London	26	C	0.0	13.9
Lyneham	23	PC	0.0	14.0
Manchester	21	C	2.0	4.6
Margate	24	PC	0.0	14.5
Milford Haven	20	S	0.0	**
Newcastle	20	PC	0.0	**
Nottingham	20	C	0.0	13.3
Orkney	12	R	1.0	**
Oxford	25	C	0.0	**
Plymouth	22	PC	1.2	**
Portland	21	PC	0.0	**
Scilly, St Mary's	18	D	0.8	**
Shoreham	28	PC	0.0	13.4
Shrewsbury	19	C	0.2	8.5
Snowdonia	18	C	0.8	**
Southend	25	PC	0.0	14.5
South Uist	13	R	4.8	**
Stornoway	13	R	4.8	2.9
Tiree	15	PC	2.8	6.5
Whitehaven	16	C	1.0	1.3
Wick	**	C	3.8	**
Yeovilton	21	R	2.0	11.0

The world

All readings local midday yesterday

Alicante	32	S	Madeira	25	PC
Amsterdam	25	S	Madrid	34	S
Athens	31	S	Malaga	28	S
Auckland	**	**	Mallorca	32	S
Bahrain	41	S	Malta	31	PC
Bangkok	31	PC	Melbourne	11	C
Barbados	29	SH	Mexico City	23	**
Barcelona	31	S	Miami	33	**
Beijing	**	**	Milan	34	S
Beirut	**	**	Mombasa	29	PC
Belgrade	33	S	Montreal	26	B
Berlin	35	S	Moscow	19	B
Bermuda	25	R	Mumbai	28	**
Bordeaux	30	PC	Munich	35	S
Brussels	23	R	Nairobi	23	B
Bucharest	28	S	Naples	34	S
Budapest	33	S	New Orleans	32	PC
Buenos Aires	**	**	New York	27	B
Cairo	34	S	Nice	31	S
Calcutta	28	R	Nicosia	35	S
Canberra	10	PC	Oslo	23	PC
Cape Town	21	S	Paris	23	PC
Chicago	26	PC	Perth	20	S
Copenhagen	25	PC	Prague	34	S
Corfu	35	S	Reykjavik	14	B
Delhi	33	**	Riga	24	B
Dubai	45	S	Rio de Janeiro	31	S
Dublin	19	PC	Riyadh	42	PC
Faro	25	S	Rome	33	S
Florence	36	PC	San Francisco	19	PC
Frankfurt	37	S	Santiago	14	B
Geneva	35	S	São Paulo	28	S
Gibraltar	26	PC	Seoul	30	PC
Helsinki	20	B	Seychelles	29	PC
Hong Kong	27	SH	Singapore	30	B
Honolulu	**	**	St Petersburg	23	S
Istanbul	28	PC	Stockholm	26	S
Jerusalem	34	S	Sydney	15	S
Johannesburg	17	S	Tel Aviv	34	S
Kuala Lumpur	31	SH	Tenerife	30	S
Kyiv	**	**	Tokyo	31	B
Lanzarote	30	S	Vancouver	21	PC
Las Palmas	28	PC	Venice	**	**
Lima	21	S	Vienna	35	S
Lisbon	27	PC	Warsaw	29	S
Los Angeles	25	PC	Washington	27	B
Luxor	38	S	Zurich	**	**

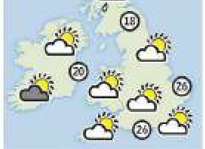
Five days ahead

A warm and mostly dry weekend, becoming fresher and changeable into next week

Tomorrow

A warm, dry and sunny day for Wales and southern England. Scattered showers in northern England and Scotland. Dry in Ireland with spells of sunshine.

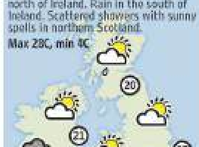
Max 27C, min 7C



Sunday

Warm and mostly dry for England, Wales, southern Scotland and the north of Ireland. Rain in the south of Ireland. Scattered showers with sunny spells in northern Scotland.

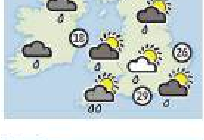
Max 28C, min 4C



Monday

Unsettled in Ireland and Scotland with outbreaks of rain. Sunny spells in England and Wales with the chance of a heavy afternoon shower.

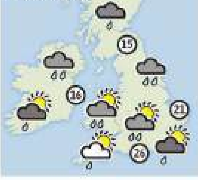
Max 30C, min 6C



Tuesday

Spells of rain in Scotland, northern England and the north of Ireland. Sunny intervals and scattered showers elsewhere, some heavy and thundery.

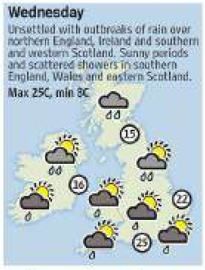
Max 26C, min 7C



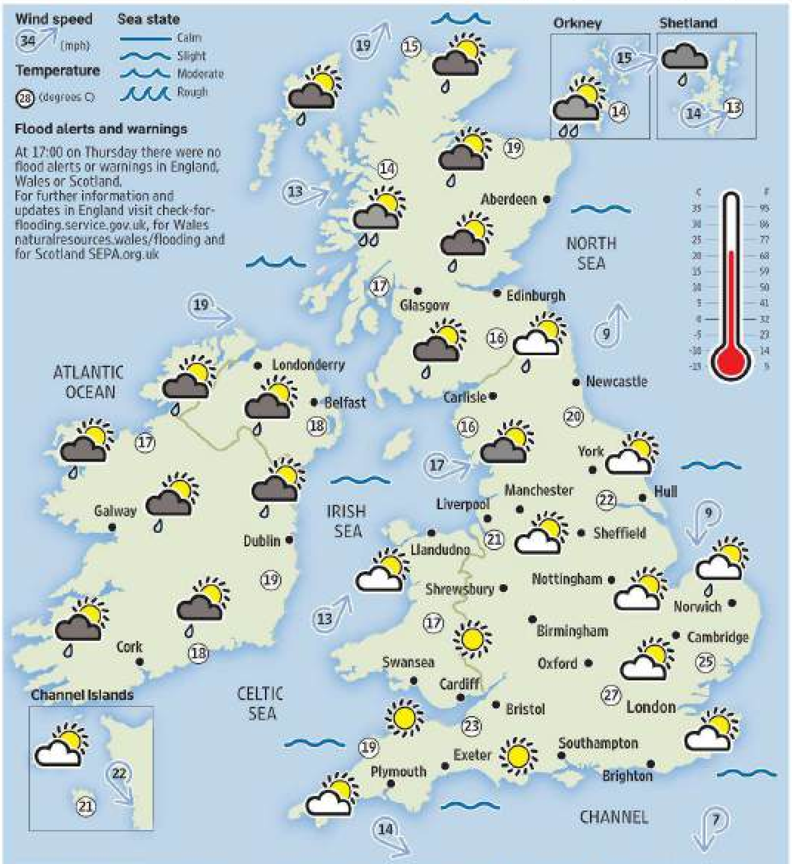
Wednesday

Unsettled with outbreaks of rain over northern England, Ireland and southern and western Scotland. Sunny periods and scattered showers in southern England, Wales and eastern Scotland.

Max 25C, min 8C



The Times weather page is provided by WeatherQuest



Flood alerts and warnings

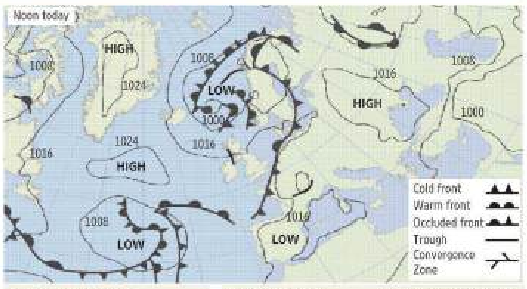
At 17:00 on Thursday there were no flood alerts or warnings in England, Wales or Scotland.
For further information and updates in England visit check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk, for Wales naturalresources.wales/flooding and for Scotland SEPA.org.uk

General situation: A warm, sunny and mostly dry day for England and Wales. Scattered showers with sunny periods over Scotland and Ireland.
Republic of Ireland, N Ireland, Borders, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Cen Highland, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, Edinburgh and Dundee, NW Scotland, Argyll, N Isles: Scattered showers, with sunny spells in-between. Light southwesterly winds, veering westerly later. Maximum 20C (68F), minimum 4C (39F).
NE Eng, Lake District, Cen N Eng, IoM, NW Eng: Partly cloudy with the chance for an isolated shower in the morning, turning sunnier this afternoon. Light westerly winds. Maximum 21C (70F), minimum 7C (45F).
E Anglia, London, Cen S Eng, SE Eng: A warm, mostly dry and sunny day. A chance for an evening shower in the east. Light west or northwesterly winds. Maximum 27C (81F), minimum 7C (45F).
S Wales, N Wales: A dry and sunny morning. It will turn cloudier into the afternoon with the small risk of an isolated shower developing in the afternoon. Light westerly winds. Maximum 22C (72F), minimum 7C (45F).
E Eng, W Mids, E Mids, SW Eng, Channel Is: Sunny periods with the chance of an isolated shower in the morning. It will turn dry and sunny in the afternoon. Light northwesterly winds. Maximum 24C (75F), minimum 7C (45F).

Tides

Tidal predictions.
Heights in metres. All times in local time

Today		Ht		Ht
Aberdeen	03:07	4.2	15:42	4.0
Avonmouth	09:18	12.1	21:34	12.4
Belfast	--:--	--	13:09	3.1
Cardiff	09:02	11.4	21:18	11.7
Devonport	07:51	5.0	20:01	5.3
Dover	--:--	--	13:08	6.4
Dublin	00:30	3.9	13:02	3.7
Falmouth	07:20	4.7	19:28	5.0
Greenock	02:13	3.4	14:30	3.0
Harwich	01:43	3.7	13:51	3.8
Holyhead	--:--	--	12:26	5.1
Hull	08:09	7.2	20:43	6.9
Leith	04:28	5.3	16:55	5.3
Liverpool	--:--	--	13:13	8.8
London Bridge	03:52	6.8	16:08	6.8
Lowestoft	11:22	2.6	--:--	--
Milford Haven	08:13	6.5	20:30	6.8
Morecambe	01:01	9.2	13:23	8.8
Newhaven	--:--	--	13:15	6.4
Newquay	07:03	6.4	19:20	6.7
Oban	07:51	3.7	20:10	3.9
Penzance	06:38	5.1	18:55	5.4
Portsmouth	01:12	4.4	13:44	4.5
Shoreham	--:--	--	13:19	5.9
Southampton	02:33	3.9	12:14	4.3
Swansea	08:18	8.7	20:34	9.0
Tees	05:28	5.3	18:04	5.2
Weymouth	09:00	1.8	21:16	2.1



Synoptic situation

A trough located over western Scotland will bring unsettled and showery weather across the north and west. A cold front clearing eastwards into continental Europe will bring fresher conditions to southern England. A slight ridge of high pressure building in from the southwest will bring largely dry and sunny conditions to the south and east.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday

Warmest: Frittenden, Kent, 29.0C
Coldest: Braemar, 2.6C
Wettest: Aultbea, Ross and Cromarty, 20.0mm
Sunniest: Manston, 14.5hrs*

Sun and moon

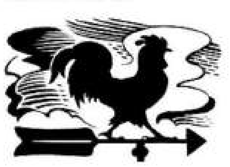
For Greenwich
Sun rises: 05.22
Sun sets: 20.50
Moon rises: 21.36
Moon sets: 08.30 Sat
Third quarter: August 6

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	21:54-04:36
Belfast	21:57-05:04
Birmingham	21:31-04:57
Cardiff	21:32-05:06
Exeter	21:31-05:11
Glasgow	21:56-04:52
Liverpool	21:40-04:58
London	21:20-04:54
Manchester	21:37-04:55
Newcastle	21:41-04:45
Norwich	21:19-04:44
Penzance	21:37-05:21
Sheffield	21:33-04:52

Weather Eye

Paul Simons



Southern England has had 1 per cent of its usual rainfall this month, drought has been declared across more than half of England and parts of Wales, and 20 million people are under hosepipe bans, with more bans likely to follow.

All eyes are focused on forecasts for any sign of rain in the driest parts, but there is only a hint of wet weather as a possible depression may pass close by next week, but that is far from certain. And even if rain does fall it will likely be too little and too late for drought-stricken areas. Substantial rain is needed, and that looks unlikely even on the most optimistic longer-range forecasts. High pressure over southern Britain is bringing further dry conditions, whilst low pressure and bands of rain are likely to sweep through the north, especially northwest Scotland.

Much of Europe has suffered far worse heat and drought this summer, but there may be lessons for the UK to learn. Southern Cyprus is one of the European Union's driest nations as rainfall has decreased as a result of climate change. And the country is also facing increasing water demands from a growing population, agriculture and tourism. Water supplies from desalination plants, reservoirs, dams and recycling waste water are no longer sufficient. And something that may horrify many in the UK is that Cyprus enforces a permanent hosepipe ban all year.

This year, a national campaign was launched to cut water consumption by 10 per cent by urging everyone to use less water for showers, brushing teeth and other uses. Intelligent water-use systems have also been introduced, such as a free app that calculates how much water each person uses compared to the national average per person and then suggests practical and measurable ways to save water. And the Nicosia city authority is also installing 72,000 smart water meters in homes that instantly detect leaks and alert consumers to help prevent them wasting water and receiving inflated water bills.

Speak directly to one of our forecasters on 09065 777675

8am to 5pm daily (calls are charged at £1.55 plus network extras)

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Wimbledon, London © AELTC

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Campbell wins gold – now for MasterChef

Rick Broadbent

Glasgow

With lions weaved into her hair, red eyeliner and a rare ability to marry feats of extraordinary strength with an ebullient personality, Emily Campbell provided the lift the Commonwealth Games needed.

Some stars have sniffed and skipped Glasgow but Campbell, 32, has more charisma than many of them put together. She peddles one-liners, conducts auditoriums and media huddles with natural warmth, and was a few minutes into talking about her second Commonwealth gold for England, to go with the Olympic silver and bronze and six European titles, when she segued into her forthcoming appearance on *Celebrity MasterChef*. "I still want to show the world that you can enjoy lifting — and you can be absolutely fabulous while you're doing it as well."

There was a lot of that showmanship in this victory in the Armadillo building by the Clyde. In the 86kg+ class, she lifted 115kg in the snatch. After a break, the crowd waited as others came and went in the concluding clean and jerk section. Then, to a mighty roar as though the headline act had just arrived, Campbell finally reappeared and wasted little time in lifting 148kg to take the gold. She blew kisses and waved to people wearing matching T-shirts. "The T-shirts are my crew," she explained. "They belong to me."

Little girls danced in the aisles. They were not the only ones drawn in by the mix of strength and glitz. She kept going and came back shortly afterwards to break the Games record with 155kg.

The announcer kept mentioning the requested weights and each one drew a huge roar. And she finished off with 163kg, a combined weight of 278kg, a huge 25kg better than Malaysia's Siti Aqilah Farhana Draman, 20, with Canada's Etta Mae Love, 18, further back in bronze. Both the other medallists spoke of how they had been inspired by Campbell's career. The Midlander can make it sound simple with her wit and easy manner, but she wore tape on her neck because she gets abrasions from the loaded bar. "When you get blood on the bar it slows down the competition and stuff," she said. "It's more a courtesy to everyone else. It's nothing wild. Don't all cry, guys. I'm fine."

This stuff hurts, though. Where? "Do you want me to be dead-ass honest with you? Everywhere. Your knees, your shoulders, your back. We're lifting serious weights and it's hard. You have to be really sensible. It's not an easy sport."

She was presented with her medal by Sophie, Duchess of Edinburgh, and thus continued a long connection between the royal family and weightlifting. The Queen made the Duke of Edinburgh sit back down as he prepared to leave the arena during Precious McKenzie's heroics at the 1978 Games. The day after that fourth Games title in Canada, the Queen held a garden party but was mortified to find McKenzie was not there, so she ordered the police to find him and bring him to her bash.

To give you an idea of Campbell's strength, the weight she lifted with her clean and jerk was tantamount to three Precious McKenzies. Preparation on her hair, with braids, red flourishes and leaping lions, started the previous day.

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SGOW 2
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Campbell lifted a Commonwealth Games-record combined weight of 278kg

"It's your fault," she told journalists. "You made it such a big thing [at the Olympics], so now it *is* a big thing."

Her confidence is good for those who may feel pressured by conventional strictures about sporting shapes. And she will soon be enchanting living rooms via her appearance on *Celebrity MasterChef*. "Training was not interrupted," she said. "Training had all been completed. It was just really nice to do something without being Emily the weightlifter. Food is something I've always been massively passionate about. My signature dish is Caribbean. That's all I'm going to give you because I want you to watch, but it's another platform for weightlifting."

Alarmingly, she did sow one seed of doubt when it came to Los Angeles and the next Olympics. The qualification system is about a series of performances over time and she said: "We've got to look at that and how we can get the body through. If I go to LA I want to be in contention for a medal, so we want to make sure that's feasible. Hopefully you'll see me there."

In truth, Campbell is made for *La La Land*, but for now she was happy to settle for Glasgow, saying it had been "phenomenal" and that her immediate ambition was a rooftop bar before signing off with a decent mantra for those obsessed with goals and gongs.

"You just set out to do what you do and do it with grace," she said. Uplifting.

● There was a major shock at the athletics, where England's Zharnel Hughes crashed out of the 200m at the semi-final stage (Mark Palmer writes). The 2022 silver medallist was sixth in a time of 20.67 – 0.47sec behind Christopher Taylor, of Jamaica, in first.

Hull doubles down after caddie prank

Women's Open
Cathy Harris

Charley Hull is usually a huge fan favourite but the Englishwoman has reacted to a fierce backlash on social media over a prank she played on her caddie by telling critics to "lighten up".

Hull, who is competing at the AIG Women's Open at Royal Lytham & St Annes, revealed at a press conference yesterday that she had used a fake scratchcard to trick her caddie, Adam Woodward, into believing he had won £100,000.

The 30-year-old recounted: "He's literally running around the players' lounge saying, 'I've won £100,000. I'm taking today off.' His face looks so happy. He couldn't believe his luck, and we had to tell him it was fake and he nearly quit."

Hull shared the Australian's euphoric reaction online. Woodward said there were no hard feelings.

"I totally fell for it and I wish I said I was acting but I wasn't," he said. "I think it's funny but revenge is going to be great. I'm going to put a suggestion box out front here for any pranks I can get Charley back. I'm honestly not bothered. It was pretty funny."

The overwhelming reaction on X, where one golf writer's tweet has received more than 2.6 million views and 600 comments, has been negative, with fans expressing disappointment and disgust.

Hull was forthright in her response, saying: "I think it was funny, Adam thought it was funny, and if people don't like it they can lump it. They need to lighten up.

"I felt bad for Adam but I've just got to have a good week and then I'll buy him a hundred genuine scratchcards."

The world No 7 is in the mix after the first day of the Women's Open, thanks to a two-under 69 in her opening round. The young Thai star Jeeno Thitikul fired a bogey-free seven-under 64 to take the solo lead. Korea's Haeran Ryu is two behind Thitikul at five under and remains on course to complete a hat-trick of majors.

Wolverhampton

Rob Wright

2.00 Gilding The Lily
2.35 Ballybunion
3.10 Carnival Of Light
3.45 Highland Shah
4.20 Roc De Fer
4.55 American Style
5.25 Sixcor

Going: standard **Sky Sports Racing**
Draw: 5f-7f, low numbers best

2.00 Maiden Stakes (£5,400: 7f) (10)

1	(9)	5-5	**MARIANNE MOZART**	139 I Mohammed & J Santos 4-9-9	S De Sousa
2	(1)	0	**ESPLANADE**	18 C Hills 3-9-2	R Coakley
3	(6)	6332	**FOXY NIGHT**	8 (P,BF) J Butler 3-9-2	J Gilligan
4	(4)		**GILDING THE LILY**	J & T Gosden 3-9-2	T Heard
5	(3)		**KERNOW ROSE**	Zoe Hawkins 3-9-2	W Cox
6	(7)	54	**NAVONA GREY**	48 G Kelleway 3-9-2	L Morris
7	(2)		**PINK PYJAMAS**	Jack Morland 3-9-2	D Muscutt
8	(5)	4-236	**RAJIBA**	14 R Hughes 3-9-2	C Fallon
9	(8)	66	**SHATIN BEAUTY**	15 Miss L Perratt 3-9-2	T Kiely-Marshall (5)
10	(10)	0-	**STAR OF COMMALA**	248 J Chapple-Hyam 3-9-2	Molly Keegan-Price (7)

15-8 Foxy Night, 3-1 Gilding The Lily, 7-2 Rajiba, 15-2 others.

2.35 Handicap (£3978: 7f) (12)

1	(6)	63253	**AL MUQDAD**	8 (V,CD) D O'Meara 6-10-2	S De Sousa
2	(3)	0-003	**GUNFIGHTER**	26 (CD) J Butler 5-10-1	J Gilligan
3	(8)	33206	**KIT GABRIEL**	24 (C,D) S Pearce 7-10-0	T Heard
4	(1)	3-45	**MERRY**	92 James Horton 3-9-9	D Muscutt
5	(9)	022-0	**BALLYBUNION**	84 (W) M Bell 3-9-8	R Coakley
6	(7)	30390	**GENEROUS RASCAL**	13 (B) D Cunha 3-9-7	J Doughty
7	(11)	00261	**LESSAY**	33 (P,CD) P Morris 5-9-7	D J Murphy (7)
8	(10)	-0005	**ANGELS' SHARE**	23 (D) W Knight 3-9-5	C Fallon
9	(5)	02100	**QUICK QUASAR**	32 (B,D) A Watson 3-9-5	L Morris
10	(4)	65006	**ESPANITA**	25 (H,CD) C Johnston 3-9-2	O Stammers
11	(12)	34-50	**PIAZZA**	15 Ollie Sangster 3-9-2	S D Bowen
12	(2)	-060P	**UNITER**	38 D Coakley 3-9-2	G Bass

11-4 Gunfighter, 7-2 Lessay, 5-1 Al Muqdad, 13-2 Merry, 12-1 others.

3.10 Handicap (£5234: 7f) (9)

1	(9)	45600	**PARIS BABE**	70 (P,D) A Watson 4-10-4	L Morris
2	(7)	441	**CARNIVAL OF LIGHT**	14 (CD) C Johnston 4-10-1	O Stammers
3	(4)	54-60	**ORCHID**	62 (T,C) G Boughey 4-10-0	J Doughty
4	(1)	31-06	**TAROT**	20 (H) R Varian 3-9-7	S D Bowen
5	(5)	21-00	**CALLAHAN**	153 (D) James Owen 3-9-6	C Fallon
6	(6)	31502	**BELLA BISBEE**	9 (CD) S Dixon 5-9-3	C Howarth (3)
7	(2)	0-540	**INSIDE STORY**	45 J Tate 3-9-3	S De Sousa
8	(3)	1-0FP	**LILI MARLEEN**	13 (D) Jack Jones 4-9-2	R Coakley
9	(8)	0-003	**GHISA**	43 (H,C,D) C Fellowes 3-9-1	D Muscutt

2-1 Carnival Of Light, 7-2 Ghisa, 9-2 Bella Bisbee, 7-1 Tarot, 10-1 others.

3.45 Handicap (3-Y-O: £3978: 1m 1f) (11)

1	(8)	43423	**LIGHTNING GLORY**	14 S & E Crisford 9-9	S De Sousa
2	(1)	2105	**CONSTANT STAR**	26 (C) Tom Clover 9-9	L Morris
3	(6)	-0213	**LILLIE MARGOT**	26 J O'Keeffe 9-8	J Doughty
4	(11)	21140	**LEXINGTON EXPRESS**	27 (P,CD) M Botti 9-7	J Gilligan
5	(7)	2-101	**SUGGY**	25 (CD) C Hills 9-7	D Muscutt
6	(10)	254	**ALWAYS BLUE**	53 (H) H Bothell 9-7	S D Bowen
7	(2)	3-413	**HIGHLAND SHAH**	22 (H) J Camacho 9-6	C Fallon
8	(9)	3-304	**THE STONE POWER**	33 R Beckett 9-4	E Greatrex
9	(5)	16-02	**INDIA GOLD**	48 G Kelleway 9-2	T Heard
10	(3)	05006	**GOLDEN MABEL**	20 (H) L Williamson 8-6	T Kiely-Marshall (5)
11	(4)	-0604	**YES WALIIM**	38 (H) R Hughes 8-6	Laura Coughlan (3)

11-4 Suggy, 9-2 Lightning Glory, 6-1 Highland Shah, The Stone Power, 8-1 others.

4.20 Handicap (£3,978: 1m 4f) (7)

1	(5)	20104	**JOSEPH**	25 (P) J Butler 4-10-1	J Gilligan
2	(7)	32262	**JODHPUR BLUE**	35 (T,BF) I Williams 5-10-1	E Greatrex
3	(3)	44-31	**ROC DE FER**	4 Sir M Prescott 3-9-9(6ex)	L Morris
4	(6)	25-40	**LOUIE'S FOLLY**	23 F O'Brien 4-9-6	Laura Coughlan (3)
5	(1)	6-06	**DARTMOUTH JET**	71 J Mackie 5-9-5	S De Sousa
6	(2)	004	**MUCH**	52 (T) J Fanshawe 3-9-4	D Muscutt
7	(4)	-3115	**FANS FAVOURITE**	4 (P) H Palmer 3-9-4	H Davies

6-5 Roc De Fer, 9-2 Joseph, 13-2 Fans Favourite, 7-1 Jodhpur Blue, 10-1 others.

4.55 Handicap (£5,234: 6f) (10)

1	(5)	/0200	**MOVING FORCE**	17 M Loughnane 4-9-13	Hope Regan (7)
2	(8)	30063	**AMERICAN STYLE**	17 (D) K Ryan 4-9-12	H Davies
3	(4)	08044	**BLINKY**	26 (P,C) A Brittain 4-9-9	S D Bowen
4	(10)	28523	**PAPA COCKTAIL**	38 (Bf,CD) M Herrington 7-9-9	E Greatrex
5	(7)	113-6	**MARIS ANGEL**	59 (CD) Fionn McSharry 5-9-8	C Whiteley (5)
6	(6)	5-060	**HK FOURTEEN**	7 (P,D) A Carroll 6-9-7	S De Sousa
7	(2)	12-00	**ANGEL OF ANFIELD**	34 (H,D) Tom Clover 3-9-6	L Morris
8	(9)	420	**HUGH**	52 C Cox 3-9-5	Georgia Dobie
9	(1)	03101	**KING OF CHAOS**	14 (CD) D Cunha 3-9-5	C Fallon
10	(3)	31-00	**ANGEL LOVE**	51 (CD) K P De Foy 3-9-4	D Muscutt

11-4 American Style, 4-1 King Of Chaos, 9-2 Papa Cocktail, 8-1 others.

5.25 Classified Stakes (£3,245: 5f) (6)

1	(6)	38531	**SIXCOR**	4 (P,CD) Miss L Perratt 8-9-13	T Kiely-Marshall (5)
2	(5)	006-0	**BUST A MOON**	60 (H,D) D Shaw 4-9-9	J Gilligan
3	(4)	08450	**CAPTAIN KINSELLA**	14 (P,T,D) J Gallagher 4-9-9	G Bass
4	(2)	-5005	**FANCY DANCER**	24 (C,D) Hayley Burton 4-9-9	L Morris
5	(1)	-8406	**HAPPIER**	10 (D) M Keighley 4-9-9	J Doughty
6	(3)	44066	**POETIC JACK**	52 (P) R Cowell 6-9-9	O Stammers

7-4 Sixcor, 10-3 Fancy Dancer, 7-2 Poetic Jack, 4-1 Happier, 12-1 others.

Yesterday's results

Goodwood

Going: Good to Firm (good in places)

1.50 (1m 1f 197yd) 1, **Ciarrai Abu** (G Wood, 10-3 fav); 2, Bourbon Blues (25-1); 3, Evanesco (11-1). 14 ran. 1l, sh. Harry Eustace.
2.25 (6f) 1, **Man's Best Friend** (R L Moore, 11-2); 2, Adaay Of Scarlett (8-1); 3, Night In Vegas (6-1). 10 ran. 1l, 1¾l. A P O'Brien.
3.00 (1m 3f 218yd) 1, **Enceladus** (D B McMonagle, 6-4 fav); 2, Geryon (15-2); 3, Venetian Lace (25-1). 7 ran. 1¾l, 4¾l. J P O'Brien.
3.35 (1m 1f 197yd) 1, **Diamond Necklace** (R L Moore, 4-6 fav); 2, Friendly Soul (5-2); 3, See The Fire (7-1). 5 ran. 27½l, 5l. A P O'Brien.
4.10 (5f) 1, **Naana's Shadow** (O Murphy, 5-1 fav); 2, U S S Charleston (50-1); 3, Miss Yechance (17-2). 18 ran. 17½l, nk. K Scott.
4.45 (7f) 1, **Sword Salute** (R Scott, 33-1); 2, The Ginger Kid (11-1); 3, The Bookkeeper (3-1). 18 ran. 2l, sh. C Johnston.
5.20 (7f) 1, **Avalon Queen** (B Loughnane, 4-1); 2, So Lovely (4-7); 3, Beguiled (16-1). 13 ran. NR: La Torre. hd, 1l. R A Teal.
5.55 (1m) 1, **Exclusive Code** (J Doyle, 2-1); 2, Zennor Storm (18-1); 3, Euston Hall (16-1). 19 ran. 1l, 1½l. A Watson.

Nottingham

Going: Good to Firm (good in places)

2.00 (5f 8yd) 1, **Roots In Touche** (M Sheehy, 10-11); 2, Funky Dory (5-6 fav). 8l. A Keatley.
2.35 (1m 75yd) 1, **Great Blasket** (C Fallon, 8-13 fav); 2, Theme Park (9-2); 3, Degale (11-2). 5 ran. 37½l, 2¼l. James Owen.
3.10 (1m 2f 50yd) 1, **Supplicate** (J Mitchell, 15-8 fav); 2, Crown Office (2-1); 3, Sassicaia (9-4). 5 ran. ½l, 4¾l. R Varian.
3.45 (1m 75yd) 1, **Queen's Hame** (C Fallon, 6-4 fav); 2, Marquessofanglesey (15-8); 3, Matter Of Britain (10-1). 5 ran. 4l, 27½l. W J Haggas.
4.20 (1m 6f) 1, **Sixty Plus** (C Fallon, 2-5 fav); 2, Beggarman (8-1); 3, Simiyann (7-1). 4 ran. nk, 5½l. J Owen.
4.55 (6f 18yd) 1, **Molly Mac** (Grace McEntee, 1-1 fav); 2, Henriette Ronner (10-1); 3, Saeculamation (11-1). 7 ran. 4½l, 1l. M Fenton.
5.25 (1m 2f 50yd) 1, **Poet's Dawn** (R Burley, 9-2); 2, Flightofthephoenix (7-2); 3, Galaxy Wonder (10-3). 6 ran. 2¼l, 1½l. T D Easterby.

Epsom

Going: Good to Firm

5.30 (1m 2f 17yd) 1, **Bobacious** (L Wright, 4-1); 2, Magical Merlin (7-1); 3, Oj Lifestyle (9-2). 6 ran. hd, 2¼l. M R Hoad.
6.05 (7f 3yd) 1, **Camarda Re** (S C Cronin, 13-2); 2, Out Of This World (9-4 fav); 3, Cool King (4-1). 9 ran. 3½l, 1½l. R Hannon.
6.40 (1m 4f 6yd) 1, **Dream Harder** (R Hornby, 10-1); 2, Two Plus Two (11-2); 3, Twilight Moon (10-1). 5 ran. nk, 3½l. D M Loughnane.
7.15 (1m 113yd) 1, **Trio** (C Hutchinson, 9-4); 2, Chantelle (2-1 fav); 3, Celestra (7-1). 4 ran. 1½l, 27½l. Eve Johnson Houghton.
7.50 (7f 3yd) 1, **Eyes Front** (R Hornby, 11-4); 2, Sun Of Dolly (7-2); 3, Credit Forgedd It (2-1 fav). 7 ran. 1¾l, 1¼l. E Smyth-Osbourne.
8.25 (6f 3yd) 1, **Sugar Sugar** (G Bass, 6-1); 2, Twirler (7-4 fav); 3, Harry Brown (13-2). 7 ran. nk, 2¼l. J Channon.

Wolverhampton

Going: Standard

4.35 (5f 21yd) 1, **A Lott Of Kane** (J Haynes, 11-4); 2, Runamara (9-2); 3, Havin A Flyer (5-2 fav). 8 ran. 2l, hd. C Banham.
5.10 (1m ½f) 1, **Between Me And U** (D Keenan, 5-1); 2, Volto Di Medusa (14-1); 3, R Mcmurphy (11-1). 11 ran. 4½l, sh. M Herrington.
5.47 (1m 1f 104yd) 1, **Bintward** (S D Bowen, 2-1); 2, Pyramid (11-8 fav); 3, Chimes Of Thunder (10-3). 8 ran. 2½l, ½l. R Varian.
6.22 (6f 20yd) 1, **Angel Sense** (S De Sousa, 9-2); 2, Supreme Star (9-4); 3, Location Location (13-8). 10 ran. 5l, 2¼l. M Botti.
6.57 (6f 20yd) 1, **Mission Command** (J Callan, 9-1); 2, Manly Fireball (7-2); 3, Hunky Dory (11-4). 11 ran. ½l, ½l. J Candlish.
7.32 (1m 4f 51yd) 1, **Blue Tulip** (L Edmunds, 16-1); 2, Evening Fades (18-1); 3, Si White (5-4 fav). 12 ran. 1¾l, sh. W Muir & C Grassick.
8.07 (7f 36yd) 1, **Iconic Times** (S D Bowen, 2-1 fav); 2, Velvet Skies (22-1); 3, African Spirit (16-1). 12 ran. 1l, 27½l. J Candlish.
8.42 (7f 36yd) 1, **Manton Road** (J Peate, 14-1); 2, On Key (9-2); 3, Midnight's Dream (13-2). 10 ran. ½l, 17½l. R T Phillips.

Goodwood

Rob Wright

1.50 Sea Of Kings (nap)	**4.10** Jonquil
2.25 Saber Strike	**4.45** The Dancing Pirate
3.00 Scoville (nb)	**5.20** Astracornus
3.35 Night Raider	**5.55** Silver Lake

Going: good to firm-good in places
Draw: 5f-6f, high numbers best — Racing TV

1.50 Coral Goodwood Handicap — ITV

(£38,655: 2m 5f) (18 runners)

1	(4)	439-24	**MAXI KING** 41 K P De Foy 6-9-12	Toby Moore (7)	♦104
2	(7)	1-1506	**DUKE OF OXFORD** 20 (T) M Bell 6-9-11	R L Moore	99
3	(15)	40-042	**DEFIANTLY** 45 (B) J P O'Brien (Ire) 4-9-7	D Browne McMonagle	100
4	(5)	321-16	**VALIANCY** 45 (P,BF) W Haggas 4-9-6	James Doyle	98
5	(17)	-01160	**BERKSHIRE SUNDANCE** 41 (P) A Balding 6-9-5	O Murphy	95
6	(3)	-13005	**ANNABEL'S GHOST** 45 M Seror 5-9-1	P C Boudot	90
7	(6)	00-005	**ALPHONSE LE GRANDE** 34 (T) A J Martin (Ire) 7-8-10	Jamie Powell	75
8	(16)	/2-111	**BELIEVITANDUCAN** 14 A King 5-8-10	W Buick	84
9	(14)	555205	**ANNIVERSARY** 20 (B) R Beckett 4-8-9	J P Spencer	90
10	(10)	050200	**CHARGING THUNDER** J12 James Owen 8-8-4	D Probert	86
11	(2)	/04-64	**HIGHWIND** 35 (P) W P Mullins (Ire) 6-8-8	David Egan	81
12	(12)	365333	**SAX APPEAL** 26 C Johnston 6-8-7	J F Egan	82
13	(11)	254-22	**SEA OF KINGS** 70 (T) Harry Eustace 4-8-6	S Osborne	79
14	(13)	511-32	**ST MAWES** 14 G Scott 4-8-4	R Dawson	80
15	(18)	46621-	**KENTUCKY RIVER** J98 O Murphy 4-8-4	J Nicholls (3)	—
16	(1)	34-536	**AGGAGIO** 28 (H,C) G & J Moore 8-8-2	Molly Gunn (5)	74
17	(8)	13-146	**GOOLOOGONG** 23 (BF) G Baker 6-8-2	Isobelle Chalmers (7)	85
18	(9)	301630	**TROJAN SUN** 7 J Goldie 6-8-2	O Tubb (5)	74

9-2 Valiancy, 5-1 Believitanducan, 7-1 Defiantly, 10-1 Maxi King, Alphonse Le Grande, 12-1 Sea Of Kings, Charging Thunder, St Mawes, Berkshire Sundance.

Rob Wright's choice: Sea Of Kings seems sure to relish this first try at a marathon trip; the fast ground is also in his favour **Dangers:** Valiancy, Anniversary

2.25 HKJC World Pool Thoroughbred Stakes — ITV

(Group III: 3-Y-O: £62,381: 1m) (7)

1	(7)	-23230	**ANDAB** 41 (B) J P O'Brien (Ire) 9-3	D Browne McMonagle	101
2	(5)	4-2010	**CATULLUS** 41 (C) C Appleby 9-3	B Loughnane	107
3	(1)	4-0504	**FIVE WAYS** 20 A Balding 9-3	Jason Watson	104
4	(3)	1-163	**SABER STRIKE** 34 (B) W Haggas 9-3	T Marquand	108
5	(6)	-05421	**SHAYEM** 22 (D) K R Burke 9-3	C Lee	109
6	(4)	1-3113	**TALK OF NEW YORK** 45 (H,D) C Appleby 9-3	W Buick	♦120
7	(2)	311-10	**YAZIN** 64 (T,D) J & T Gosden 9-3	R L Moore	96

8-11 Talk Of New York, 5-1 Saber Strike, 6-1 Shayem, 10-1 Yazin, 14-1 Catullus, 16-1 Andab, 20-1 Five Ways.

Wright choice: Saber Strike looked lazy when third at York; this step up in trip will suit, while the fitting of blinkers can help him focus **Danger:** Talk Of New York

3.00 Coral Golden Mile (Heritage Handicap) — ITV

(£90,195: 1m) (22)

1	(13)	-42504	**CERULEAN BAY** 5 (CD) D O'Meara 5-9-12	C T Keane	♦115
2	(20)	3-5310	**ARCHIVIST** 44 (H,BF,D) H Al Jehani (UAE) 4-9-12	C Rodriguez	91
3	(3)	4-0443	**EBT'S GUARD** 27 (D) W Muir & C Grassick 5-9-11	L Edmunds	103
4	(19)	0-1610	**MISTER WINSTON** 44 (D) A Balding 4-9-10	O Murphy	103
5	(22)	-11602	**ENGLISH OAK** 15 (D) H Al Jehani (UAE) 6-9-9	Faleh Bughanaim	103
6	(6)	12-231	**INDALO** 27 (H,D) R Varian 5-9-9(3ex)	R Dawson	104
7	(15)	13-233	**TWO TEMPTING** 146 (D) J Portman 7-9-7	R Hornby	85
8	(12)	0-2100	**CLASSIC** 27 (D) R Hannon 6-9-6	P Dobbs	99
9	(5)	0-0000	**OZAT** 27 (D) I Williams 5-9-6	B Loughnane	94
10	(18)	104-00	**SCOVILLE** 44 (T,D) W Haggas 4-9-5	T Marquand	93
11	(8)	5/60-4	**BLUE BROTHER** 43 (BF,D) H Al Jehani (UAE) 5-9-5	James Doyle	98
12	(14)	500-00	**GODWINSON** 44 (CD) J Chanson 6-9-5	D Probert	89
13	(9)	24-106	**COSI BELLO** 20 C Fellowes 4-9-4	Doubtful	97
14	(10)	310000	**MIRSKY** 27 (D) D O'Meara 7-9-1	Doubtful	84
15	(11)	3-110	**BUNYOLA BAY** 33 R Hannon 3-9-1	R L Moore	102
16	(1)	2-1411	**BEAGLE BAY** 48 (D) R Beckett 4-9-1	H Crouch	94
17	(4)	00-336	**TRIBAL CHIEF** 27 (T,CD) D Menuisier 5-9-0	J P Spencer	93
18	(7)	506005	**HAWKSBILL** 2 (D) R Spencer 4-9-0	G Wood	75
19	(2)	00-000	**ANCIENT ROME** 22 (C,D) C Hills 7-9-0	David Egan	82
20	(21)	-50090	**RHOSCOLYN** 2 (T,CD) D O'Meara 8-8-13	Doubtful	80
21	(17)	-06000	**DARKNESS** 34 (V,C,D) D O'Meara 8-8-9	Saffie Osborne	89
22	(16)	-31000	**WALSINGHAM** 26 (D) D O'Meara 6-8-8	Toby Moore (7)	88

4-1 Indalo, 13-2 Scoville, 7-1 Blue Brother, Beagle Bay, 8-1 Tribal Chief, 12-1 Ebt's Guard, Archivist, 14-1 Classic, Rhoscolyn.

Wright choice: Scoville shaped well when seventh in the Hunt Cup at Royal Ascot on his first start after a wind operation **Dangers:** Beagle Bay, Blue Brother

3.35 King George Qatar Stakes — ITV

(Group II: £170,130: 5f) (15)

1	(13)	50-110	**NIGHT RAIDER** 45 (D) K R Burke 5-9-7	James Doyle	112
2	(9)	1-0206	**AMERICAN AFFAIR** 20 (D) J Goldie 6-9-4	P Mulrennan	109
3	(5)	-11453	**JAKAJARO** 13 (D) R Cowell 5-9-4	J P Spencer	110
4	(14)	0-4003	**JM JUNGLE** 20 (CD) J & S Quinn 6-9-4	J Hart	108
5	(2)	1-0111	**LAMBORGHINI BF** 19 (T) F Reuterskiold (SWE) 5-9-4	Elione Chaves	—
6	(8)	201332	**PARTISAN HERO** 13 (D) D Loughnane 6-9-4	C T Keane	106
7	(3)	60-201	**RUMSTAR** 27 (C,D) J Portman 6-9-4	R Hornby	110
8	(6)	1-0000	**ASFOORA** 27 (B,T,BF,D) Henry Dwyer (Aus) 7-9-1	O Murphy	105
9	(10)	-61505	**AZURE ANGEL** 20 (B,T,D) E Bethell 6-9-1	D Tudhope	104
10	(4)	0-5000	**TIME FOR SANDALS** 41 Harry Eustace 4-9-1	K Shoemark	103
11	(7)	-03002	**ASPECT ISLAND** 20 (P) James Owen 3-9-0	B Loughnane	109
12	(11)	2-6405	**BRUSSELS** 13 (P,T) A P O'Brien (Ire) 3-9-0	R L Moore	100
13	(12)	33-100	**DICKENSIAN** 20 (D) K Ryan 3-9-0	Shane Gray	106
14	(1)	-44661	**ARGENTINE TANGO** 41 (D) T Easterby 3-8-11	T Eaves	98
15	(15)	1-0320	**SPICY MARG** 21 (BF,CD) M Bell 3-8-11	T Marquand	♦115

7-2 Night Raider, 9-2 Rumstar, 6-1 Jakajaro, 8-1 Jm Jungle, American Affair, 10-1 Asfoora, Spicy Marg, 12-1 Aspect Island.

Wright choice: Night Raider has improved since being gelded; he was badly drawn at Royal Ascot and can return to his best **Dangers:** Partison Hero, Jm Jungle

4.10 Regent Seven Seas Cruises Bentinck Conditions Stakes — ITV

(£51,540: 1m 1f) (9)

1	(6)	-43134	**BOILING POINT** 28 (C,D) K R Burke 5-9-12	C Lee	♦117
2	(4)	0-0100	**JONQUIL** 20 (C) A Balding 4-9-12	C T Keane	123
3	(3)	01-525	**NAQEEB** 20 (C) J Camacho 6-9-12	R Sexton	116
4	(7)	1131-0	**CROWN OF OAKS** 33 W Haggas 4-9-10	T Marquand	104
5	(5)	33-601	**DIEGO VENTURA** 57 H Al Jehani (UAE) 4-9-10	C Rodriguez	107
6	(1)	112536	**DIVIDEND** 28 (P,D) Dr R Newland & J Insole 4-9-10	K Shoemark	115
7	(2)	4046-0	**AMBIENTE FRIENDLY** 42 (P) James Owen 5-9-7	B Loughnane	87
8	(9)	324-04	**GALEN** 45 (V) J P O'Brien (Ire) 5-9-7	D Browne McMonagle	109
9	(8)	136-00	**HAATEM** 45 (BF,C) R Hannon 5-9-7	James Doyle	106

7-2 Haatem, 4-1 Galen, 5-1 Boiling Point, 13-2 Jonquil, 15-2 Diego Ventura, 8-1 Dividend, 10-1 others.

Wright choice: Jonquil never landed a blow after being held up in a slowly run race at Ascot; this drop in class and longer trip will suit **Dangers:** Galen, Haatem

4.45 Hawes & Curtis Nursery

(2-Y-O: £30,924: 6f) (18)

1	(14)	510	**PERSIAN SPRING** 41 (D) R Hannon 9-9	J P Spencer	♦87
2	(8)	415	**SKY SECRET** 13 C Cox 9-8	J Nicholls (3)	87
3	(16)	10	**REVELS** 43 K R Burke 9-6	S James	75
4	(2)	442	**THE DANCING PIRATE** 34 A Balding 9-5	O Murphy	86
5	(17)	310	**SOVEREIGN GLORY** 41 C Hills 9-5	Jason Watson	83
6	(15)	6212	**JAIJAI** 18 (BF,C) R Hannon 9-5	P Dobbs	84
7	(12)	231	**CLASH OF HEARTS** 40 (D) A Keatley 9-5	MP Sheehy	87
8	(4)	431	**DUBAI CHAMPION** 44 R Haslam 9-4	R L Moore	83
9	(1)	6211	**INNICHEN** 29 (D) J Channon 9-3	T Marquand	82
10	(9)	5415	**SUPER TUSCAN** 20 (D) E J-Houghton 9-1	C Bishop	85
11	(5)	45511	**PAPER VIEW** 4 (D) R Hannon 9-0(6ex)	J Leavy	73
12	(7)	100	**WILD TERRAIN** 44 (D) H Palmer 8-11	D Probert	68
13	(13)	0231	**MAY BEE IN PROFIT** 63 T Easterby 8-10	S B Kirrane	76
14	(11)	4213	**ARABICA QUEEN** 11 (D) J Portman 8-9	R Hornby	74
15	(18)	3560	**SOCIAL SPIRIT** 20 M & D Easterby 8-8	R Dawson	70
16	(10)	344	**PERIGORD NOIR** 49 (P) G Baker 8-5	J F Egan	62
17	(3)	610	**MOONLIGHT TANGO** 62 K Ryan 8-4	S Osborne	73
18	(6)	5632	**GLOBAL SUCCESS** 22 (P) J S Moore 8-2	O Tubb (5)	67

6-1 Innichen, 13-2 Clash Of Hearts, 8-1 Arabica Queen, Jaijai, 10-1 Sky Secret, The Dancing Pirate, Dubai Champion, May Bee In Profit.

Wright choice: The Dancing Pirate improved when second at Chester; he looks well treated on his handicap debut **Dangers:** Dubai Champion, Super Tuscan

5.20 World Pool Bet With The Tote Handicap

(3-Y-O: £25,770: 1m 3f) (14)

1	(11)	311522	**SILVER STATE** 49 (V) J Channon 9-9	Rosa Dawes (5)	♦92
2	(12)	-50120	**PEARL RIVER** 20 R Hannon 9-8	J Leavy	91
3	(8)	42-410	**ECHO OF STARS** 41 (T) Oliver Cole 9-7	J P Spencer	90
4	(9)	2114	**PIERIAN** 43 (D) W Haggas 9-7	T Marquand	89
5	(2)	1220	**INTO THE LIGHT** 43 (P) C Appleby 9-7	W Buick	89
6	(3)	222202	**WATERFORD CASTLE** 23 (B,BF) G Boughey 9-5	B Loughnane	86
7	(13)	331	**STEEL RAVEN** 24 A Keatley 9-5	MP Sheehy	86
8	(4)	214	**LEONARDO BLU** 18 Tom Clover 9-1	David Egan	71
9	(10)	4-2451	**DEVIL'S PEAK** 14 (B,D) J & T Gosden 9-1	James Doyle	82
10	(6)	004116	**PARISIAN SCHOLAR** 2 C Johnston 8-13	J Hart	80
11	(1)	41-403	**MAGNATURA** 14 (V,C) T Ward 8-13	K Shoemark	84
12	(5)	434	**KENERGY** 29 G Baker 8-12	R Dawson	85
13	(7)	5-3213	**MYTHICAL VALENTINE** 31 (P,D) A Balding 8-12	O Murphy	79
14	(14)	0-6612	**ASTRACORNUS** 22 D Menuisier 8-7	S Osborne	75

7-2 Pierian, 4-1 Into The Light, 5-1 Silver State, 8-1 Astracornus, 10-1 Parisian Scholar, Pearl River, Steel Raven, 14-1 Devil's Peak.

Wright choice: Astracornus stayed on strongly when a nose second at Newbury; this stiffer test can bring improvement **Dangers:** Into The Light, Devil's Peak

5.55 British Stallion Studs EBF Fillies' Handicap

(£43,809: 1m 2f) (7)

1	(6)	505-13	**WISPER** 34 (BF,D) A King 8-9-12	David Egan	89
2	(2)	021226	**LADY DORA MAE** 27 G Boughey 3-9-9	B Loughnane	♦95
3	(7)	40-604	**ZGHARTA** 21 (D) A Balding 4-9-9	O Murphy	84
4	(3)	-10305	**SPINNING LIZZIE** 27 Dr R Newland & J Insole 3-9-9	K Shoemark	90
5	(1)	111865	**FOLK PAGEANT** 14 (D) C Johnston 3-9-2	H Crouch	90
6	(5)	-31211	**ROOM FOURTEEN** 22 (H,D) J Fanshawe 3-8-12	R L Moore	83
7	(4)	0-631	**SILVER LAKE** 20 (T,D) W Haggas 3-8-6	S Osborne	78

7-4 Room Fourteen, 3-1 Silver Lake, 6-1 Lady Dora Mae, 7-1 Zgharta, 8-1 Wisper, 10-1 Folk Pageant, 16-1 Spinning Lizzie.

Wright choice: Silver Lake won at Salisbury on her first try at this ten-furlong distance; lightly raced and there should be plenty more to come **Danger:** Zgharta

Night Raider can rocket to glory in sprint

Rob Wright Racing Editor

The Wathnan Racing team target the biggest festivals and, after four winners at Royal Ascot, the Qatar-based owners can land a second double of the week at Glorious Goodwood through **Night Raider** and **Sea Of Kings** today.

Night Raider tackles the featured King George Qatar Stakes (3.35) and he can improve on last year's sixth in this contest. He stayed on the unfavoured stands side of the track that day, beating those that he raced with, but was no match for the runners on the other side of the course. He has been gelded since and looked an improved model in winning his first two starts this season before again being scuppered by a poor draw at Royal Ascot.

He has a high cruising speed that should be well suited to this sharp track and can bounce back to form.

Sea Of Kings can take the opening Coral Goodwood Handicap (1.50). This lightly raced four-year-old has been crying out for a thorough test of stamina and can make the most of a lenient mark on his first try at two-and-a-half miles here.

He showed lots of ability in hot handicaps at the top meetings last season and made a pleasing return when second over an inadequate trip at Doncaster. Softer ground was against him at Pontefract, but this surface and longer trip will surely see him in a better light.

Newcastle

Rob Wright

2.10 Wicklow Way	**4.30** Reginald Charles
2.45 Siouxperb	**5.05** War And Love
3.20 Ned Broy	**5.40** Material Girl
3.55 Nana's Boy George	

Going: standard to slow
Draw: no advantage — Sky Sports Racing

2.10 Classified Stakes

(£3,245: 1m 2f) (10)

1	(1)	25600	**ARRANMORE** 6 (B,T,CD) M Hammond 9-9-9	A Brookes
2	(2)	15504	**BALQAA** 14 (CD) T Culhane & S Barclay 8-9-9	B McHugh
3	(7)	0-000	**BITACORA** 12 (B) D Bourke 6-9-9	O Orr
4	(3)	-0534	**INSPIRING SPEECHES** 35 (P,D) Sara Ender 5-9-9	J Peate
5	(8)	63030	**MILLBUIE** 18 (B,T) Ewan Whillans 5-9-9	W Pyle
6	(5)	D0/44	**ROGERS DREAM** 45 Gihan Arnolda 5-9-9	P J McDonald
7	(9)	6-660	**TIBERIO FORCE** 67 (B,D) S Whitaker 7-9-9	A Elliott
8	(10)	00030	**WICKLOW WAY** 37 (CD) M Walford 4-9-9	J Garritty
9	(6)	23-00	**DUE TO SHINE** 76 (P) B Ellison 3-9-0	C Hardie
10	(4)	66000	**EVA THE DEEVA** 28 N Tinkler 3-9-0	A Jary (3)

11-4 Inspiring Speeches, 7-2 Rogers Dream, 4-1 Millbuie, 13-2 Tiberio Force, 15-2 Wicklow Way, 14-1 Eva The Deeva, Bitacora, 16-1 Arranmore.

2.45 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,400: 6f) (8)

1	(6)	10	**SIOUXPERB** 45 (B) A Watson 9-11	O Orr
2	(2)	0	**BLUE PETE** 62 M Appleby 9-4	P J McDonald
3	(8)		**ROYAL STRIKE** K R Burke 9-4	P-L Jamin
4	(7)		**SONIC ANGEL** S & E Crisford 9-4	J Mitchell
5	(3)		**ST HELIER** K Ryan 9-4	D Costello
6	(4)	0	**UBETAWATCHOUT** 69 N Tinkler 9-4	F McManoman
7	(1)		**WHICHONESTHAT** N Tinkler 9-4	A Jary (3)
8	(5)	00	**WHISPER ANGEL** 13 N Tinkler 8-13	E Tindall (5)

7-4 Siouxperb, 3-1 St Helier, 10-3 Royal Strike, 4-1 Sonic Angel, 25-1 Blue Pete, Ubetawatchout, 33-1 Whichonesthat, 66-1 Whisper Angel.

3.20 Handicap

(£3,245: 2m) (9)

1	(6)	450-1	**CHAMBERS** 27 Faye Bramley 4-9-9	J Mitchell
2	(3)	10452	**TIME TURNER** 15 (V,C) E Bethell 4-9-9	P J McDonald
3	(9)	-6235	**NED BROY** 42 (P) I Jardine 5-9-5	M Winn
4	(4)	01142	**IS SHE NOW** 22 (P,BF) D Bourke 8-9-2	O Orr
5	(8)	26-90	**STAND STRONG** 46 (W,B,T,CD) Ewan Whillans 6-9-1	D Costello
6	(1)	35/00	**GALAHAD THREEPWOOD** 25 Ewan Whillans 9-8-9	B McHugh
7	(7)	60032	**SPEECHMAN** 23 (V) P Kirby 6-8-7	C Hardie
8	(2)	-5440	**ARCIMBOLDO** J13 M Sowersby 4-8-4	A Brookes
9	(5)	606	**THE LAKES** 73 (P) S Whitaker 4-8-4	A Elliott

11-8 Is She Now, 3-1 Time Turner, 4-1 Chambers, 7-1 Ned Broy, 14-1 Stand Strong, Speechman, 50-1 The Lakes, Arcimboldo, Galahad Threepwood.

3.55 Handicap (3-Y-O: £3,978: 5f) (13)

1	(7)	11225	**GO LOCKERS GO** 38 (D) M Bell 9-9	T Langley (5)
2	(10)	22030	**BELIEVEINMENOW** 42 N Tinkler 9-8	F McManoman
3	(6)	01000	**HOUNDHILL** 15 (V,CD) N Tinkler 9-8	A Jary (3)
4	(2)	50203	**BRAVE TRAVELLER** 36 (C) B Smart 9-7	C Hardie
5	(5)	6-421	**NANA'S BOY GEORGE** 84 Alexandra Dunn 9-6	B McHugh
6	(11)	443-0	**PERINEIGHS** 56 S Spencer 9-5	D Swift
7	(13)	62020	**VINCIAMO** 15 (T) K Ryan 9-4	P-L Jamin
8	(8)	5-010	**DONTWASTE A MOMENT** 47 (T,CD) I Furtado 9-4	J Peate
9	(9)	3-325	**TAAKLAM** 71 H Bethell 9-4	P J McDonald
10	(1)	-0411	**SUNLIT SEA** 7 (B,D) Sir M Prescott 9-4	Doubtful
11	(4)	543	**MAYFLYER** 156 T Culhane & S Barclay 9-2	O Orr
12	(3)	1-060	**BELLA DELIZIA** 36 (D) N Tinkler 9-0	E Tindall (5)
13	(12)	14625	**PIVOTAL TERMS** 36 (C) I Jardine 8-10	M Winn

7-4 Nana's Boy George, 7-2 Taaklam, 7-1 Go Lockers Go, 8-1 Mayflyer, Brave Traveller, 12-1 Pivotal Terms, 14-1 Believeinmenow, 20-1 Dontwaste A Moment, Vinciamo.

4.30 Handicap (£4,711: 7f) (10)

1	(1)	42000	**JUDICATURE** 22 (C) J Parkinson & S Smith 4-10-2	T Langley (5)
2	(2)	46050	**WISH THIS** 8 (B,C) A Brown 4-10-1	A Rawlinson
3	(9)	5-640	**WHY BECAUSE** 28 (H) P Midgley 4-10-1	M Winn
4	(5)	63526	**REGINALD CHARLES** 28 (CD) G Oldroyd 6-9-13	P J McDonald
5	(3)	14036	**JAMAICAN STORM** 46 (C) B Smart 4-9-13	O Orr
6	(7)	05036	**ANDALPROFIT** 52 (C) N Tinkler 4-9-12	A Jary (3)
7	(6)	-0000	**UNCERTAINTY** 47 S Whitaker 3-9-9	A Elliott
8	(10)	36-0	**ARC LA SHARI** 47 I Furtado 3-9-7	J Peate
9	(8)	10000	**SMARTANCK** 25 (C,D) A Brittain 3-9-6	C Hardie
10	(4)	646	**HEATHERS FEATHER** 35 T Waggott 3-9-3	B McHugh

3-1 Reginald Charles, 4-1 Jamaican Storm, 5-1 Judicature, 11-2 Andalprofit, 6-1 Why Because, 10-1 Uncertainty, 12-1 Wish This, 16-1 Heathers Feather.

5.05 Handicap (£4,711: 7f) (9)

1	(7)	45536	**HOLLY MIST** 27 (H,BF) R Varian 4-10-1	J Mitchell
2	(4)	60133	**TRAVIS** 13 (D) G Harker 5-10-0	W Pyle
3	(1)	30045	**FINN IRONSIDE** 8 (T,CD) I Furtado 5-9-13	Elle-May Croot (5)
4	(9)	5-034	**WAR AND LOVE** 13 (P) B Ellison 4-9-12	F McManoman
5	(8)	-6020	**RORY'S GOLD** 30 S Waugh 4-9-11	Amie Waugh (3)
6	(5)	41506	**SAISONS D'OR** 23 (CD) J O'Keeffe 11-9-10	J Garritty
7	(2)	1-660	**CORAMENTO** 181 (CD) R Craggs 5-9-8	O Orr
8	(6)	2-000	**ROGUE OFFICER** 114 (H) A Brittain 4-9-7	E Tindall (5)
9	(3)	35-00	**TICKTYBOO** 55 (V) J Coulson 5-9-4	A Jary (3)

5-2 Travis, 7-2 Holly Mist, 9-2 Finn Ironside, 13-2 Rory's Gold, War And Love, 7-1 Saisons D'Or, 12-1 Coramento, 66-1 Ticktyboo, 100-1 Rogue Officer.

5.40 Classified Stakes (£4,711: 6f) (14)

1	(10)	02636	**ANGEL OF ENGLAND** 6 (P,D) A Brown 5-9-9	B McHugh
2	(7)	43060	**ASADJUMEIRAH** 55 (P,T,CD) A Brittain 8-9-9	E Tindall (5)
3	(13)	62404	**DESERT MASTER** 14 (V,C) A Brittain 5-9-9	C Hardie
4	(2)	/0-06	**DRISH SAMPHIRE** 17 (H) L Mullaney 4-9-9	A Rawlinson
5	(1)	00040	**KITAAB** 21 (CD) P Kirby 7-9-9	A Brookes
6	(8)	20-02	**NO NEWS** 24 (B) J R Jenkins 6-9-9	J Peate
7	(9)	00320	**RIDGEMASTER** 35 (BF,C) S Waugh 4-9-9	Amie Waugh (3)
8	(14)	20-26	**UNCLE SAM** 30 (CD) R Craggs 4-9-9	Oisin Orr
9	(3)	0-044	**BLOSSOM IN THE AIR** 34 (B) Robert Edwards 3-9-4	T Langley (5)
10	(4)	24240	**LONG SHOT** 13 (P) T Easterby 3-9-4	F McManoman
11	(6)	054	**MATERIAL GIRL** 27 A Watson 3-9-4	P-L Jamin
12	(11)	05606	**REALISTIC DREAM** 35 I Jardine 3-9-4	M Winn
13	(5)	36004	**RUNNINMAN** 134 D Whillans 3-9-4	P J McDonald
14	(12)	0606	**TICKHILL FLYER** 53 (B) J Perkinson & S Smith 3-9-4	D Costello

10-3 No News, 5-1 Uncle Sam, 6-1 Ridgemaster, 8-1 Desert Master, Angel Of England, 10-1 Long Shot, 12-1 Material Girl, Asadjumeirah.

Newmarket

Rob Wright

5.50 National Honour	**7.32** Where's Freddy
6.25 Without Prejudice	**8.02** Society Girl
7.00 Spring Bloom	**8.32** Crimson Rambler

Going: good to firm
Draw: no advantage — Racing TV

5.50 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,669: 6f) (7)

1	(6)		**BLUE VICTORY** W Knight 9-7	M Ghiani
2	(5)	46	**CLOUD SUMMIT** 25 G Boughey 9-7	P Cosgrave
3	(1)		**HAYATE** R Varian 9-7	R P Downey
4	(4)	32	**LOUIS THE FIFTH** 17 M Bell 9-7	B Sayette
5	(7)		**NATIONAL HONOUR** C Appleby 9-7	C Planas
6	(3)		**HAPPY DAISY** S C Williams 9-2	Grace McEntee
7	(2)	25	**SEXY CHICK** 22 R Spencer 9-2	R Havlin

2-1 Hayate, 11-4 National Honour, 5-1 Louis The Fifth, 13-2 Sexy Chick, 10-1 Cloud Summit, Happy Daisy, 16-1 Blue Victory.

6.25 Novice Stakes (£6,185: 1m 2f) (4)

1	(2)	1	**ALEATRIX** 31 (D) R Beckett 3-9-9	R Clutterbuck
2	(3)		**GOLDEN ISLAND** H Main 3-9-2	M Ghiani
3	(4)	502	**LA MARIPOSA** 14 P Charalambous & J Clutterbuck 3-9-2	P Cosgrave
4	(1)		**WITHOUT PREJUDICE** J & T Gosden 3-9-2	R Havlin

Evens Without Prejudice, 6-5 Aleatrix, 8-1 La Mariposa, 33-1 Golden Island.

7.00 Handicap (£5,154: 6f) (10)

1	(1)	15420	**GOOD EARTH** 20 (C,D) M Herrington 9-10-0	C Planas
2	(6)	685-0	**DANCING RINCA** 27 (D) Hayley Burton 7-9-13	S Donohoe
3	(3)	62521	**SPRING BLOOM** 13 (CD) J Butler 9-9-12	N Callan
4	(9)	2/0P4	**TANMAWWY** 18 (B,H,D) H Main 8-9-11	R Clutterbuck
5	(7)	-0052	**JIMMY KNOCKER** 22 (T,CD) Andi Brown 5-9-9	M Ghiani
6	(2)	40031	**ROBERT ANSTRUTHER** 14 (D) H Candy 3-9-9	N Currie
7	(4)	00300	**REBEL PATH** 22 (P,D) S C Williams 7-9-5	Olivia Haines (7)
8	(5)	30-06	**CURRAHEE** 21 (T) S C Williams 4-9-4	P Cosgrave
9	(8)	46-60	**BLUE SAMUNA** 77 (H) James Owen 3-8-12	R Havlin
10	(10)	-0000	**CHIEDOZIE** 25 P McEntee 5-8-11	Grace McEntee

11-8 Robert Anstruther, 4-1 Spring Bloom, 9-1 Jimmy Knocker, 8-1 others.

7.32 Handicap (£6,442: 7f) (9)

1	(8)	0-002	**JUMBY** 13 (V,BF,D) E J-Houghton 8-9-11	O Carmichael (7)
2	(3)	03210	**PHYSIQUE** 20 (CD) M Fenton (Ire) 6-9-10	Grace McEntee
3	(1)	45-04	**EXPOSURE** 20 (BF) J & T Gosden 4-9-10	R Havlin
4	(9)	05433	**NIKOVO** 20 (D) M Herrington 7-9-9	R Scott
5	(2)	26315	**MILETUS** 13 (P,T,CD) J Keane 5-9-6	K Fraser
6	(4)	0-041	**WHERE'S FREDDY** 13 (P,T,CD) S C Williams 6-9-3	M Ghiani
7	(5)	25260	**RENESMEE** 44 (P) Michael Keady 6-9-0	K S McHugh (7)
8	(7)	01022	**CHERRY COBBLER** 15 (P,T,D) S C Williams 4-8-13	C R Lyons (7)
9	(6)	33113	**DION BAKER** 16 (P,D) M Wigham 7-8-11	A Egan (7)

4-1 Physique, 9-2 Jumby, 5-1 Where's Freddy, 13-2 others.

8.02 Handicap (£5,154: 1m 4f) (5)

1	(5)	45003	**DANCE TIME** 14 (D) D Loughnane 6-10-2	Laura Pearson
2	(1)	-1034	**SIBLING RIVELRY** 21 (D) D M Simcock 4-10-0	M Ghiani
3	(4)	-6045	**HUGGABLE** 8 (T) D Cunha 4-9-8	N Currie
4	(2)	0-003	**SOCIETY GIRL** 22 E Walker 3-9-1	A Lewis (5)
5	(3)	040	**SPINNEY** 46 Tom Clover 3-8-6	C Planas

2-1 Sibling Rivelry, 11-4 Society Girl, 3-1 Dance Time, 9-2 Huggable, 12-1 Spinney.

8.32 Handicap (£5,154: 1m) (7)

1	(4)	00-03	**DRIFTS AWAY** 8 (P,D) T Kent 5-10-7(5ex)	R Kavanagh (3)
2	(2)	01045	**RISING FORCE** 21 (D) J Butler 5-10-1	N Callan
3	(5)	02024	**BORN A REBEL** 14 (H,C,D) P Owens 5-9-8	B Sayette
4	(1)	-0213	**MERTOUN** 27 (D) J Chapple-Hyam 3-9-7	A Egan (7)
5	(6)	63-04	**CURRUMBIN** 29 (H) Michael Keady 5-9-7	K S McHugh (7)
6	(7)	-0621	**KING OF CHARM** 41 (P,CD) Martin Dunne 5-9-4	Alice Bond (5)
7	(3)	23032	**CRIMSON RAMBLER** 13 (B,D) M Crawley 3-9-0	R Scott

7-4 Mertoun, 7-2 Drifts Away, 5-1 Rising Force, 13-2 King Of Charm, 15-2 others.

Musselburgh

Rob Wright

5.45 Jedhi Knight	**7.55** Monhammer
6.15 Gerry's Darling	**8.25** Gallus Norman
6.50 Aurora Valkyrie	**8.55** Golden Havana
7.25 Jer Batt	

Going: good-good to soft in places on straight course
Draw: 5f, high numbers best — Racing TV

5.45 Handicap (£3,664: 1m 5f) (10)

1	(6)	60-06	**MR WITHINGTON** 26 (P,T) Ewan Whillans 5-9-9	C Beasley
2	(2)	211P0	**GEMINI MAN** 6 (C) I Jardine 8-9-9	K Stott
3	(3)	23-52	**JEDHI KNIGHT** 24 (B) P Midgley 4-9-8	D Nolan
4	(1)	06333	**SOPHIESTICATE** 11 (C) R M Smith 7-9-7	S Farmer (5)
5	(4)	00640	**STORM ON JURA** 25 J Goldie 4-9-4	Lauren Young (5)
6	(5)	/5-00	**IVYNATOR** 35 (P) Mrs J McGregor 8-9-4	JP Sullivan
7	(9)	30403	**YAKHABAR** 14 (B) L Bailey 7-9-2	B Garritty
8	(10)	02022	**FALAISE BLANC** 31 (V) K Scott 4-9-2	G Fairley
9	(7)	0/40-	**LIBERTY LOOMING** J81 (T) A Nicol 5-9-1	B Robinson
10	(8)	-0444	**STAR OF MARKINCH** 56 Gary Rutherford 10-9-1	O McSweeney

9-4 Jedhi Knight, 3-1 Falaise Blanc, 7-2 Sophiesticate, 6-1 Gemini Man, 10-1 Mr Withington, 16-1 Yakhabar, Storm On Jura, 25-1 Liberty Looming.

6.15 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £5940: 7f) (5)

1	(1)		**COUL BLUE** M Dods 9-7	C Beasley
2	(2)	53	**HEY UP RONNIE** 12 (BF) O Pears 9-7	H Russell
3	(3)	6	**NOSEY BOOK** 12 (P) T Easterby 9-7	O McSweeney
4	(5)	00	**THAI PADDY** 12 T Easterby 9-7	D Fentiman
5	(4)	002	**GERRY'S DARLING** 12 Roger Fell 9-2	K Stott

11-8 Gerry's Darling, 6-4 Hey Up Ronnie, 13-2 Nosey Book, 7-1 Coul Blue, 33-1 Thai Paddy.

6.50 Nursery (2-Y-O: £4,187: 7f) (7)

1	(2)	6002	**BIGALO** 9 Roger Fell 9-9	K Stott
2	(5)	664	**BOUTBLUMMINTIME** 43 A Keatley 9-8	O McSweeney
3	(1)	06612	**AMANTHA** 27 (CD) B Ellison 9-7	B Robinson
4	(7)	26420	**BLUESTONE LADY** 17 (B) Phillip Makin 9-6	B Garritty
5	(6)	053	**AURORA VALKYRIE** 25 K Scott 9-6	C Beasley
6	(3)	0420	**LIVEADREAM** 7 Phillip Makin 9-5	H Russell
7	(4)	06033	**TIGER IN THE TREE** 17 (P) T Easterby 8-10	D Fentiman

2-1 Amantha, 7-2 Tiger In The Tree, 9-2 Bigalo, 11-2 Boutblummintime, 7-1 Aurora Valkyrie, 11-1 Liveadream, 20-1 Bluestone Lady.

7.25 Handicap (£6,804: 5f) (5)

1	(4)	30-03	**JER BATT** 96 (CD) D & N Barron 6-9-10	D Nolan
2	(1)	03153	**MIGHTY MAGNUS** 27 (BF,CD) M Dods 3-9-9	C Beasley
3	(3)	05-05	**FRANCISCO'S PIECE** 52 (D) A Keatley 4-9-9	O McSweeney
4	(2)	12063	**MONTEZUMA** 44 (H,BF,CD) J Goldie 4-9-6	Lauren Young (5)
5	(5)	44401	**CURIOUS ROVER** 18 (CD) K Scott 5-9-4	K Stott

11-4 Curious Rover, 3-1 Jer Batt, Mighty Magnus, 9-2 Montezuma, 11-2 Francisco's Piece.

7.55 Handicap (£3,664: 7f) (7)

1	(3)	25-66	**BRAES OF DOUNE** 18 (P,C,D) J Goldie 8-9-9	Lauren Young (5)
2	(6)	02240	**KING SHARJA** 28 (D) R Carr 6-9-9	JP Sullivan
3	(2)	06620	**APRIL DIAMOND** 25 I Jardine 5-9-9	G Fairley
4	(5)	51305	**SANDITON** 17 (P,D) C Johnston 4-9-8	C Beasley
5	(4)	03296	**MONHAMMER** 18 (CD) Miss L Perratt 8-9-2	H Burns (3)
6	(1)	66234	**MISEMERALD** 15 (P,D) P Kirby 5-9-0	K Stott
7	(7)	6-032	**WAIT FOR IT** 9 L Bailey 4-9-0	B Garritty

7-4 Wait For It, 4-1 Misemerald, 5-1 Sanditon, 6-1 Braes Of Doune, 15-2 Monhammer, 8-1 King Sharja, 20-1 April Diamond.

8.25 Handicap (£4,711: 2m) (7)

1	(1)	62432	**INAPPROPRIATE** 18 (P,T) Ewan Whillans 5-9-9	G Fairley
2	(6)	6200/	**TEOFIMO** J40 (T) A Nicol 5-9-8	B Robinson
3	(2)	13310	**CLANSMAN** 34 (D) L Bailey 8-9-5	B Garritty
4	(5)	3-062	**ARRANGE** 39 (P,C,D) M Todhunter 8-9-3	D Nolan
5	(4)	-0625	**SIMPLE STAR** 18 (C) Gary Rutherford 8-9-2	C Beasley
6	(7)	-2131	**GALLUS NORMAN** 42 (CD) J Goldie 7-9-0	J Dickson (5)
7	(3)	21343	**CASCADE HALL** 18 (H,BF,CD) J Goldie 7-8-12	Lauren Young (5)

9-4 Inappropriate, 10-3 Gallus Norman, 7-2 Cascade Hall, 4-1 Arrange, 10-1 Simple Star, 20-1 Teofimo, Clansman.

8.55 Handicap (£3,664: 5f) (6)

1	(6)	41421	**THORNABY PEARL** 20 (D) Adrian Nicholls 8-9-13	J Dickson (5)
2	(2)	02226	**THUNDERSTORM KATIE** 20 (CD) J Goldie 5-9-13	B Garritty
3	(5)	-2353	**PEREGRINE FALCON** 57 P Morris 4-9-10	H Burns (3)
4	(3)	33222	**GOLDEN HAVANA** 3 (V,D) M Dods 3-9-9	C Beasley
5	(4)	00406	**SOUTH PARADE** 25 (CD) R & P Fahey 5-9-8	D Nolan
6	(1)	24044	**WEE MARY** 4 (H,CD) J Goldie 4-9-3	Lauren Young (5)

7-4 Thornaby Pearl, 11-4 Golden Havana, 4-1 Peregrine Falcon, 13-2 Wee Mary, 8-1 Thunderstorm Katie, 16-1 South Parade.

Bath

Rob Wright

5.35 Bumaan	**7.18** Kodicall
6.08 Havana Gift	**7.48** Beerwah
6.43 Some Nightmare	**8.18** Racing Demon

Going: firm
Draw: no advantage — Sky Sports Racing

5.35 Handicap (£3,278: 1m 6f) (4)

1	(4)	06063	**SEA OF CHARM** 16 (P) G Nicholls 8-11-2	H Main (3)
2	(2)	33031	**BELLE OF KT** 8 J S Moore 5-10-11(5ex)	Scarlett Dorricott (5)
3	(1)	56022	**BUMAAN** 15 (T,BF) G Boughey 3-10-3	H Callan
4	(3)	000	**FABLED SPIRIT** 46 (P) A Watson 3-10-2	B Hampson

Evens Belle Of Kt, 2-1 Bumaan, 4-1 Sea Of Charm, 20-1 Fabled Spirit.

6.08 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,400: 6f) (7)

1	(6)	61	**SHEER BEAUTY** 16 (C) J & S Birkett 9-7	D E Hogan
2	(4)	560	**CRIMSON BLAZE** 75 (W) R Hughes 9-6	F Marsh
3	(7)	40242	**HAVANA GIFT** 10 J & S Quinn 9-6	W Fentiman (3)
4	(3)	02	**TEXAS CROWN** 30 Daisy Hitchins 9-5	L Catton (3)
5	(1)		**THAI BOXER** A Wintle 9-5	D Keenan
6	(2)	0	**ZONNEVELD** 7 J S Moore 9-5	Taylor Fisher
7	(5)	5662	**TRICKY JENNY** 16 James Owen 9-0	M Paetel (5)

9-4 Tricky Jenny, 5-2 Sheer Beauty, 10-3 Havana Gift, Texas Crown, 25-1 Crimson Blaze, 33-1 Thai Boxer, Zonneveld.

6.43 Classified Stakes (£3,454: 6f) (9)

1	(1)	40500	**BATTLE POINT** 31 M Attwater 7-9-9	G Mangan
2	(4)	50-63	**I WAS THINKING** 56 A Wintle 5-9-9	D Keenan
3	(7)	60532	**JACKIE BROWN** 14 (T,BF,D) A Wintle 6-9-9	F Marsh
4	(3)	0-565	**RINKY TINKY TINKY** 14 (P,D) Mrs I G-Levoque 4-9-9	T Fisher
5	(8)	03402	**SISTERS IN THE SKY** 30 (P,CD) G Harris 7-9-9	D E Hogan
6	(5)	35433	**SOME NIGHTMARE** 15 (B,D) J G O'Shea 9-9-9	W Carson
7	(2)	05220	**SPIRITED DANCER** 31 (P,CD) D & C Kubler 4-9-9	E Nader
8	(6)	03043	**SYMBOL OF HOPE** 16 (P,CD) G Harris 8-9-9	C Hutchinson
9	(9)	00343	**ROGUE REBELLION** 17 R Harris 3-9-4	W Carver

13-4 Some Nightmare, 7-2 Jackie Brown, 5-1 Rogue Rebellion, 7-1 I Was Thinking, Sisters In The Sky, 8-1 Symbol of Hope, 12-1 Spirited Dancer, 16-1 Rinky Tinky Tinky, 33-1 Battle Point.

7.18 Novice Stakes (£4,320: 6f) (6)

1	(5)	0-	**IT'S A MUGS GAME** 331 J Tickle 3-9-7	C Hutchinson
2	(1)	5	**KODICALL** 17 J S Moore 3-9-7	Taylor Fisher
3	(2)	50	**ELMFIELD** 35 G Scott 3-9-6	D Keenan
4	(6)	5043	**HONKY TONK GIRL** 10 Oliver Cole 3-9-4	M Paetel (5)
5	(4)	20044	**NZURI** 17 (P) F Brennan 3-9-4	G Mangan
6	(3)	50	**KAIKO** 39 A Wintle 3-9-2	F Marsh

13-8 Honky Tonk Girl, 9-4 Kodicall, 7-2 Nzuri, 13-2 Elmfield, 33-1 It's A Mugs Game, 50-1 Kaiko.

7.48 Handicap (£3,454: 6f) (5)

1	(3)	20244	**CONNIE'S ROSE** 15 (P,T,C,D) G Harris 7-9-9	W Carson
2	(5)	10610	**BEERWAH** 11 (B) J & S Quinn 4-9-6	W Fentiman (3)
3	(1)	45100	**NORDIC GLORY** 39 (C,D) M Attwater 7-8-13	O Lewis (5)
4	(2)	40442	**CANDY WARHOL** 10 (P,T,D) S Dixon 7-8-12	M Mortensen (5)
5	(4)	60-50	**PAYFORANOTHER DAAY** 56 (P) S Hodgson 6-8-4	G Mangan

6-4 Candy Warhol, 2-1 Connie's Rose, 7-2 Beerwah, 8-1 Payforanother Daay, 20-1 Nordic Glory.

8.18 Handicap (£3,454: 1m 2f) (6)

1	(2)	-4012	**BLUE HERO** 16 (BF,CD) A Wintle 8-9-12	F Marsh
2	(4)	50250	**RACING DEMON** 17 (C) E De Giles 6-9-10	W Carver
3	(6)	-0056	**OFFIAH'S BOY** 16 (C,D) J Tickle 5-9-8	T Fisher
4	(5)	00006	**HAMMAL** 17 (P) M Young 5-9-3	C Hutchinson
5	(3)	0-054	**ALL ABOUT GEORGE** 7 (P) Kieran Burke 4-9-3	Josephine Gordon
6	(1)	0300-	**MISS COLETTE** 338 (W) Sir M Prescott 3-8-8	G Mangan

6-5 Blue Hero, 3-1 Miss Colette, 11-2 Racing Demon, 15-2 All About George, 12-1 Offiah's Boy, Hammal.

Root named permanent Test captain under new coach

Elizabeth Ammon

Stephen Fleming has been confirmed as England's new Test head coach, with Joe Root appointed as the permanent captain.

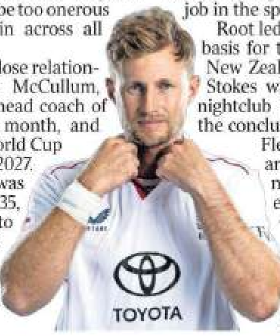
The New Zealander has signed a four-year contract, which runs until 2030, but will not be in charge for England's next Test series as he will not travel to the UK until the end of the summer. Marcus Trescothick, England's assistant coach, will lead the squad for the three-match series against Pakistan, which begins on August 19.

Fleming, 53, recently left his job as head coach of the Chennai Super Kings after an 18-year association with the Indian Premier League franchise.

A statement by the ECB confirmed that Trescothick would be in charge for the remaining three Tests of the summer. It said: "This is to allow Fleming to spend time with his family in New Zealand after leaving his long-term association with CSK earlier this month. Fleming is set to fly to the UK later this summer to begin preparations for the South Africa Test tour."

England have opted to appoint Root on a permanent basis rather than just for the Pakistan series. Root and Harry Brook, the white-ball captain, were the only viable candidates to take over from Ben Stokes after his shock retirement last month and England believe that it would be too onerous for Brook to captain across all three formats.

Brook has a very close relationship with Brendon McCullum, who was sacked as head coach of the Test team this month, and there is a 50-over World Cup in the autumn of 2027. Therefore it was decided that Root, 35, should be the man to the lead England into next summer's Ashes, having stepped down from the job in the spring of 2022.



Root will captain the England Test team

CHRIS ARJOON/ICON SPORTSWIRE VIA GETTY IMAGES

Root led the team on an interim basis for the second Test against New Zealand this summer when Stokes was suspended after the nightclub incident that followed the conclusion of the first Test.

Fleming, 53, does not have any red-ball or international coaching experience but has led CSK to a record five Indian Premier League titles and has also led the Southern Brave to the final of the men's Hundred in 2023. He played for Middlesex, Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, where he was captain of the 2005 championship-winning side.

"I'm incredibly excited to be joining England as Test coach," Fleming said. "It's one of the most prestigious coaching positions in world cricket and I am honoured to be appointed.

"I'm particularly looking forward to working with Joe Root as captain — a generational talent who has achieved so much already. There is still plenty more to come from him"

Fleming and McCullum were New Zealand team-mates and set up a business together in 2010 providing data systems to cricket governing bodies.

Edge and calm make Fleming correct choice

Mike Atherton

Chief Cricket Correspondent

Stephen Fleming feels like a good fit. Sometimes intuition is as important as anything revealed under interview, given the demands of coaching England are so different to anything gleaned in a lengthy recruitment process. You can whiteboard and talk until the cows come home, but what are you like under pressure, when things are going wrong and everyone is calling for your head?

Although there is much to be gained from intuition, there is a lot of information to gather from elsewhere, of course. There is the candidate's past record and his reputation, as well as what players who have been in the dressing room with him say. Fleming's CV and reputation within the game are strong, though with a notable absence of coaching in red-ball cricket, which he has eschewed in favour of the franchise circuit.

He fits the bill in some important ways: first, he is available, having recently left his job after a very long stint with the Chennai Super Kings (CSK); second, he will likely rub along well alongside Brendon McCullum, who is a fellow Kiwi, and they are known to get on (they have been in business together); and third, he is a grown-up in cricketing terms, having done it all as a player and having held a high-profile head coach's job in the Indian Premier League, where the scrutiny and pressure are significant, although subtly different from coaching a national side.

At this point in time it would have been difficult for a candidate to be appointed for whom this was a first, big job. The Test team and the infrastructure around it are in need of some careful reordering and having someone who is used to life as a head coach, as Fleming has been with CSK, is ideal. In cricketing terms, and in his general demeanour, he's a grown-up, and a grown-up is what is required at this juncture.

In outlook, he will not be dramatically different from McCullum, though he will run a tighter ship. In an interview with Cricket Monthly magazine in March 2024, he was asked about why he allowed players in the CSK franchise to have optional nets (ring a bell?). This was his reply: "We're a big believer that as soon as the players wake up, they're planning their day and can be going to practice or not.

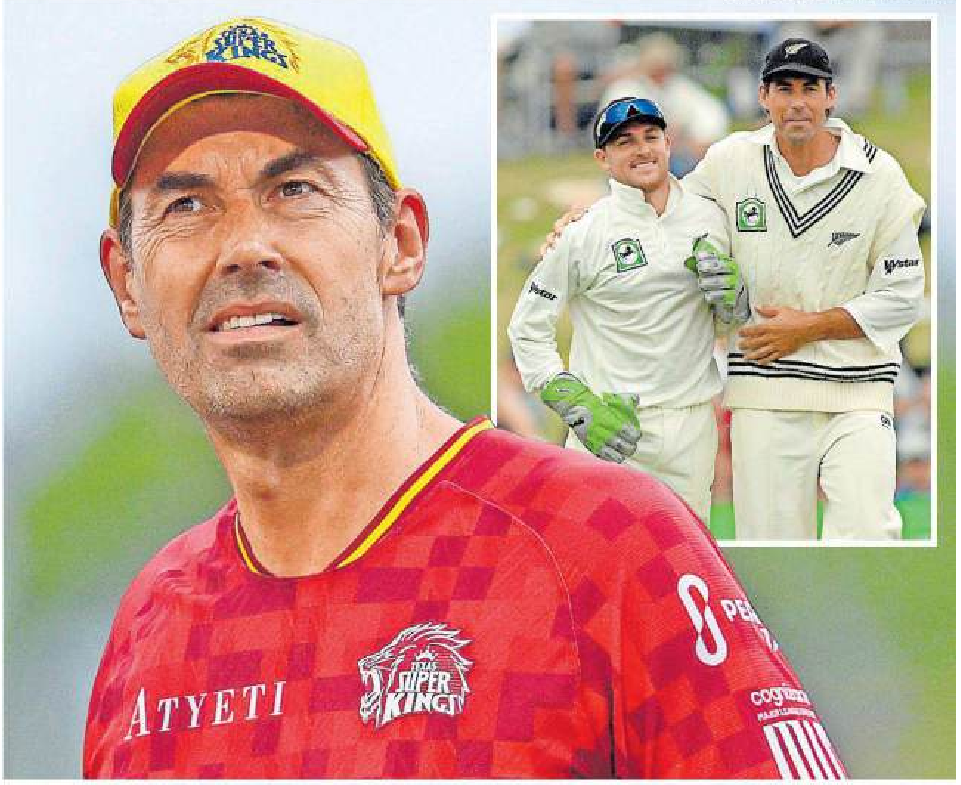
"Because training is optional there are things that the players will be doing that will make them better, working on the mental side of the game [for example], but if they choose to go to training, they should have a clear plan themselves.

"If you just keep prescribing what you need to do and putting out times in the nets and saying 'this is what you want to achieve', the player is not thinking about what they need to do to get better. Cricket's actually a selfish game wrapped up around some team components. Players are so unique in the way they approach cricket … we feel that by giving them autonomy to do what they think is best for them, it allows us to shape a programme for that individual which will ultimately help the team."

There is a lot of McCullum there, of course. And it would have been silly to appoint someone at the opposite end of the McCullum spectrum — a Justin Langer, say — given what McCullum has achieved and built into the dressing room culture and given that he is still around. Similar philosophy with a sharper edge and more attention to detail may be the best way to describe Fleming's likely approach.

His appointment means that New Zealand's influence on English cricket is strong. Alongside Fleming, McCullum will continue in his role as white-ball coach. There is Tim Southee, a specialist fast-bowling coach, and Jeetan Patel, the lead spin-bowling coach. Their humility and ability to maximise resources mean the Kiwis are excellent role models, but the lack of serious English candidates should be a cause for concern.

A few were in the running. Jonathan Trott, Gareth Batty and Richard Dawson were in the conversation, and they will be candidates possibly for a strengthened and changed coaching outfit under Fleming and McCullum.



Fleming has never had an international head coaching job. He played with McCullum, inset, in the New Zealand Test side

One of McCullum's initial strengths was the way he made his assistants believe wholly in his methods, but this also became a weakness. He needed to be challenged to a greater degree, and one of Fleming's jobs will be to build a stronger, more resilient, more challenging coaching set-up which he then oversees.

Fleming, 53, has a strong record as player and captain of New Zealand and coach of CSK, with whom he has been involved since the league's inception in 2008. He was a tall, willowy left-hander who made nine centuries in 111 Tests, but he really made his mark as captain. He was a cool customer as an opposite number (his first game as captain in 1997 in Christchurch was against my England team) and led in a shrewd but calm way. It was clear from the outset that he would be an excellent leader.

As coach, he latched on to MS Dhoni and the CSK franchise once he finished as a player, and had considerable success with them, leading them to five IPL titles. You don't last as long as he did with a franchise like that unless you are both skilled as a coach and as a people person. Cutting his teeth in a cut-throat environment without losing his essential calm and understated demeanour says a lot for his temperament.

Though a Kiwi, Fleming possesses a strong association with the English game, which is important. He played for three counties, mainly Nottinghamshire, and he coached the Southern Brave in the Hundred most recently. He will not be coming in cold and should be able to negotiate good relationships with his counterparts in domestic cricket.

His first significant decision was the Test captaincy and he and Rob Key have taken the sensible decision not to appoint Harry Brook, who is not ready for the job and who has too much on his plate playing across three formats and captaining in white-ball cricket. Clearly Brook's partnership with McCullum is flourishing and that left only Joe Root or Jacob Bethell — the latter a year younger, at 22, than Fleming was when made captain of New Zealand — as realistic alternatives.

Root's return in a permanent capacity is a reflection of the paucity of options and lack of senior leadership in the team, which must be a focus of Fleming's in future. Root's limitations were revealed in the Test against New Zealand at the Oval last month, when it didn't take long for his usual equanimity to disappear, but needs must and Root was never likely to turn down the opportunity to help out. While Root's appointment is not ideal, it is a better outcome than having Brook at the helm.

Fleming must find a way to replace Ben Stokes. As a seam bowling all-rounder, Stokes is the hardest cricketer in the Test team for whom to find a successor and there are no like-for-like alternatives. For English conditions, the obvious way to go is to replace Stokes with a spin-bowling all-rounder — Calvin Harrison would be my choice; Rehan Ahmed will probably be theirs — which would allow for four seamers, who are still, after all, the main match-winners in England.

He must sort out the rubbish around the curfew and the can-we-can't-we drinking nonsense, and iron out any wrinkles with McCullum over the multi-format players like Jofra Archer, Brook and Bethell. These cricketers will be in high demand over the coming 12 months, with an Ashes next summer followed by a 50-over World Cup. Both coaches will want their best teams in those formats in the build-up to them. The Ashes are just 12 months' hence — not much time to get sorted, even for a man of Fleming's undoubted attributes.

Fleming's recent departure from CSK came at a fortunate time for Key. After Andy Flower spurned the ECB's initial interest, there were few outstanding candidates available. Although it leaves a small interregnum during the Pakistan series, when Marcus Trescothick will be given the opportunity to emerge from McCullum's shadow, Key has alighted on the best alternative.

Staveley's consortium close to buying 25% stake in West Ham

Martyn Ziegler Sports News Reporter of the Year **Kit Shepard**

Amanda Staveley's consortium is close to buying a stake in West Ham United, which could signal a possible takeover of the club.

The consortium led by Staveley, her husband Mehrdad Ghodoussi, and their firm, PCP Capital Partners, is believed to be in pole position to buy the late David Gold's 25 per cent shareholding from his daughter, Vanessa.

If successful, the next move could be to make an offer for the shares owned by David Sullivan to take majority control of the club.

Staveley, who led the takeover of Newcastle United for Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, is understood to be backed by investors mainly from the United States and the Far East.

They had considered a bid for Tottenham Hotspur, but now aim to take over West Ham, restore the Championship club to the Premier League, and even potentially buy the London Stadium, with the idea of investing heavily in the ground.

The consortium's plan includes significant investment in players to revive the club's fortunes.

It is understood that the consortium has already held talks with officials connected to the London mayor's office about taking over the stadium.

However, any sale to Staveley's consortium is subject to a "pre-emption process", which means the existing shareholders would have the first option to buy the shares instead. That includes Daniel Kretinsky, the Czech tycoon who is the other major shareholder.

Sullivan resigned as West Ham co-chairman in June after allegations of sexual abuse were uncovered by a Times and BBC Panorama investigation. The 77-year-old British businessman was accused of exploitative and predatory behaviour when he was making his fortune in the adult industry, with the claims dating back to the 1980s. Sullivan's resignation, after 16 years leading West Ham, was announced two days before the Times and BBC investigation was published.

Sullivan categorically denies the allegations and has labelled them "factually incorrect and entirely false". He has been subject to a safeguarding ban preventing him from having any contact with members of the West Ham academy or women's team since 2023. These restrictions were imposed by the club on the recommendation of the FA after at least one complaint to the national governing body, and Sullivan accepted them for a "quiet life".

Sullivan's 38.8 per cent share in West Ham is under scrutiny from the Independent Football Regulator in the wake of the allegations. West Ham had a turbulent year even before the accusations aimed at Sullivan emerged. In April, Baroness Brady stepped down as vice-chair after 16 years, and the club was relegated the next month.

Kretinsky, who also owns Royal Mail and a stake in Sainsbury's, purchased an initial 27 per cent stake in West Ham in 2021. After West Ham's relegation, he pledged to provide financial support for the club to return it to the Premier League.

West Ham have held on to their captain, Jarrod Bowen, and opted to keep Nuno Espírito Santo as head coach. Bowen was persuaded to stay after a conversation with Kretinsky and Jiri Svarc, a board member, in Prague.

Staveley was a figurehead of PIF's takeover of Newcastle in October 2021. She facilitated the Saudi-backed £305 million investment, and acquired a 10 per cent stake for herself and Ghodoussi, who both became directors at the club. The couple subsequently decreased their stake, and agreed to sell their remaining shares and leave the club in the summer of 2024.

RYAN BROWNE/SHUTTERSTOCK

The consortium led by Staveley, left, and her husband Ghodoussi, right, wants to revive the Championship club's fortunes

Elliott has no regrets about loan with Villa

Ian Whittell

Harvey Elliott admits he still does not know if his future lies with Liverpool, but insists he has no regrets over a move to Aston Villa that left him playing only a little more than 100 Premier League minutes last season.

The 23-year-old claims the campaign was not a lost year, having collected a Europa League winners' medal as part of Unai Emery's squad in May.

Now Elliott is back at Liverpool, where he has featured in both games under Andoni Iraola on their pre-season tour to the United States, although he has no idea whether he will figure in the new manager's plans.

Speaking publicly for the first time since his Aston Villa loan, Elliott said: "I'm not too sure yet [about where he fits into Iraola's plans]. That's a conversation for me to have more in detail with him. Right now I'm just thinking about making sure I'm physically and mentally 100 per cent, and trying to impress on the pitch.

"I need to be more cautious in my decisions. Ultimately, I'm still wanting to be selfish, from that aspect of doing what's right for me, and whether I'm staying here and fighting for my place, or whether that's potentially going elsewhere, I'm still unsure at this moment until I get some more intel."

Elliott admitted that his loan move to Villa "didn't work out" but added: "That's last season, now I'm here. It's a second chance, especially with the gaffer and new coaching staff coming in. It's another chance to impress, and hopefully get in their good books.

"I wouldn't say it was a lost year, because at the end of it I won the Europa League, and to have that on my CV is incredible."

Meanwhile, defender Joe Gomez will miss the start of the season with a leg muscle injury he picked up during the pre-season match against Sunderland.

"I think it will be impossible to have him for the start of the season because we are not so far but it shouldn't be a lot more," Iraola said.

De Zerbi confident Spurs will make another 'bomba' signing

Peter Rutzler Sydney

Roberto De Zerbi believes Tottenham Hotspur have completed only "60 per cent" of their work during this transfer window and has promised supporters that there will be one more "bomba" signing — despite already breaking the club's transfer record twice.

The Spurs head coach also revealed that after his appointment, England's Djed Spence spoke to him about leaving the club this summer, along with the midfielder Lucas Bergvall, the captain Cristian Romero and the goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario, adding that while he would like players to stay he would not stand in their way if they wished to depart.

Spurs have spent more in this transfer window than in any previous season, with three of their six summer signings costing a total of £237 million: the centre back Jan Paul van Hecke for £52 million and the midfielders Mateus Fernandes, for £85 million, and Sandro Tonali, for £100 million. However De Zerbi, who said that he is "like a shark" when he picks a transfer target, is still keen to add to his attacking options. He said another big signing was in the pipeline, which, it is understood, is likely to be in addition to Savinho, who is in talks to sign from Manchester City.

"The transfer market, it's not finished for sure, but we completed 60 per cent of our project, now we have another bomba," De Zerbi said. "I hope [it is close], but it's not finished for sure.

"[We want] attackers, and then we find the position. I normally don't love working with plan A, plan B, plan C. It's plan A, then stop. Because the players are not the same. There are not two players the same.

"Before bringing in the winger, we have to consider the full back, because we start from the full back, from the player we already have, no? And then we have to consider the number of goals. For sure we have to increase the number of goals with the play, with the quality of the play, but we have to bring players able to score goals. We have to consider set pieces, we have to increase also the height, a lot of things."

Bergvall, the Sweden international, has been the subject of rejected bids from Newcastle United and Nottingham Forest. De Zerbi revealed that in April he had multiple discussions with his players about their futures.

"At the beginning of my time, in April, I had, I don't know, one million individual meetings, and they [Romero and Vicario] told me their idea," De Zerbi said. "I said, 'Yes, help me to stay up, and then I'll help you to leave. If you don't help me to stay up, you stay underwater with me.'"

Results

Cricket

The Hundred

Men: Southern Brave v Birmingham Phoenix

Utilita Bowl (Birmingham Phoenix won toss and elected to bowl): Southern Brave (4pts) beat Birmingham Phoenix (0) by 12 runs.

Southern Brave		(balls)
†J L Smith c Owen b Dwarshuis	6	(5)
B S McKinney c Ferreira b Owen	18	(9)
T B Abell st †Clarke b Ahmed	22	(19)
J J Rodrigues c Ferreira b Ahmed	34	(26)
D A Miller c Mahmood b Dwarshuis	24	(21)
T Stubbs c Currie b Ahmed	5	(6)
*C J Jordan c Evans b Currie	3	(4)
S A Zaib not out	3	(3)
J C Archer run out (Ferreira)	0	(2)
L Wood not out	10	(5)
Extras (w 3)	3	
Total (8 wkts, 100 balls)	**128**	

A U Rashid did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-7, 2-40, 3-55, 4-87, 6-112, 7-116, 8-116.

Bowling Dwarshuis 4-9-18-2; Mahmood 2-4-17-0; Currie 4-5-40-1; Owen 1-2-4-1; Tariq 4-8-17-0; Ahmed 4-5-25-3; Ferreira 1-2-7-0.

Birmingham Phoenix		(balls)
†J M Clarke c Stubbs b Stoinis	7	(10)
W C F Smeed c Miller b Wood	35	(28)
R Ahmed c Archer b Jordan	16	(16)
L J Evans c †Smith b Stoinis	18	(11)
*D Ferreira b Archer	1	(3)
M J Owen b Rashid	7	(10)
S R Dickson not out	20	(13)
B J Dwarshuis c Miller b Wood	4	(8)
S W Currie c †Smith b Wood	0	(1)
S Mahmood run out (Rashid)	0	(1)
U Tariq not out	0	(0)
Extras (lb 2, nb 1, w 5)	8	
Total (9 wkts, 100 balls)	**116**	

Fall of wickets 1-28, 2-52, 3-64, 4-65, 5-83, 6-89, 7-115, 8-115, 9-115

Bowling Wood 4-7-24-3; Archer 4-12-21-1; Stoinis 4-13-16-2; Rashid 4-10-18-1; Jordan 4-5-35-1.

Women: Southern Brave v Birmingham Phoenix

Utilita Bowl (Birmingham Phoenix won toss and elected to bowl): Southern Brave (4pts) beat Birmingham Phoenix (0) by 24 runs.

Southern Brave		(balls)
M E Bouchier b Filer	45	(31)
†L Lee c Smith b Capsey	43	(28)
L Wolvaardt st Spence b King	11	(15)
J J Rodrigues not out	28	(18)
*S G Molineux not out	8	(9)
Extras (w 4, nb 1)	5	
Total (3 wkts, 100 balls)	**140**	

J L Grewcock, N D Dattani, S Glenn, I E C M Wong, L K Bell and M R Corteen-Coleman did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-68, 2-97, 3-112.

Bowling Smith 4-0-23-0; Khan 3-0-33-0; Filer 3-0-22-1; King 4-0-23-1; Gray 2-0-16-0; Capsey 4-0-23-1.

Birmingham Phoenix		(balls)
D S T Perrin c Bouchier b Glenn	52	(43)
T T Beaumont c Rodrigues b Corteen-Coleman	22	(23)
A R Capsey c Molineux b Bell	8	(9)
*E A Perry not out	16	(11)
A Dercksen c Bouchier b Molineux	5	(9)
†J E M Spence c Glenn b Molineux	0	(1)
F S Khan not out	5	(4)
Extras (lb 4, w 4)	8	
Total (5 wkts, 100 balls)	**116**	

A M King, E Gray, L C N Smith and L L Filer did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-73, 2-87, 3-92, 4-110, 5-110.

Bowling Bell 4-0-16-1; Molineux 4-0-24-2; Wong 4-0-26-0; Corteen-Coleman 4-0-19-1; Glenn 4-0-27-1.

One Day Cup: Group A: Preston Lancashire 220 (A Shetty 53) Notts Outlaws 189 (K Verreynne 61). Lancashire (4pts) beat Notts Outlaws (0) by 31 runs.

Golf

Women's Open: Lytham St Annes: Leading first-round scores: 64 A Thitikul (Thai). **66** S Kuwaki (Japan), H Ryu (S Korea). **67** C Boutier (Fr), Y Noh (US).

Rugby League

Super League
Huddersfield Giants 22 Hull FC 16.

Fixtures

Cricket

The Hundred: Old Trafford Manchester Super Giants v Trent Rockets (women 3.0, men 6.30).

One Day Cup (11.0 unless stated): **Group A: Canterbury** Kent v Somerset. **Northampton** Northamptonshire Steelbacks v Leicestershire Foxes. **Bristol** Gloucestershire v Surrey (14.0). **Group B: Repton** Derbyshire Falcons v Glamorgan. **Chelmsford** Essex v Hampshire. **Worcester** Worcestershire Rapids v Middlesex. **York** Yorkshire v Durham.

Football

Scottish Premiership Dundee United v Rangers (8.0)

Rugby League

Super League (8.0 kick-off unless stated): Hull Kingston Rovers v Bradford Bulls, Leeds Rhinos v Toulouse, Leigh Leopards v Wigan Warriors.

Infantino is deluded bureaucrat and he must be kicked out

Alyson Rudd

Senior Sports Writer

The words "everyone can be bought" must have been on the paper inside a fortune cookie that was opened by Gianni Infantino when he was an impressionable teenager. It was a message that held true when he was elected Fifa president in 2016. He campaigned on the promise of a $5 million windfall to each member association if they voted him in. And — lo! — he won.

He used the same ploy as he plotted to sell off the World Cup. Vote in favour of his self-serving scheme and you get $40 million. Vote against and you get 75 per cent less. Tempting, then, to accede, especially for those associations that need a grassroots boost and new coaches, but they may not even get the chance because the backlash against Infantino is so vehement that it leaves his dastardly scheme with nowhere to go. Which surely means his time is up. And if this deluded bureaucrat will not step down voluntarily, then emergency measures must be taken to remove him from office on the grounds of bringing the game into disrepute.

His plan, partially scuppered by being exposed sooner than he would have liked by The Times, was a hit with a small group of American investors that have close links to Donald Trump but greeted with opprobrium by everyone else. The fans hated the idea, as did the players, as did many of the associations that Infantino assumed would be wooed by the promised cash injection. Fellow bureaucrats have lined up to label the proposal "irresponsible and indefensible", something that prompts "great concern and disappointment".

But most damning of all and what pulls the rug, swiftly, from under his feet is that the vote by Uefa to boycott Fifa tournaments if the Word Cup is sold to private investors was unanimous. Infantino must have been hoping for schisms, that vested interests, financial need or gain, would hold just enough sway to squeeze the vote his way, that enough football associations would inhale through gritted teeth and say it is better to be inside Infantino's gold-plated tent than outside it.

But no one who matters is speaking up for him. He thought, perhaps, it would only be plucky little Norway popping its head above the parapet — as it did to raise ethical concerns over Donald Trump's intervention on the banning of Folarin Balogun during the World Cup — and that no one else would have the guts to question his moral fibre. Instead, everyone in Uefa was Norway. Everyone was appalled.

Any ordinary person would realise their time was up, that they had gone too far, and graciously step down, admitting they had misjudged the mood. But Infantino is incapable of reading the room.

This is the man who thought awarding the spurious Fifa peace prize to Trump would be the starting point for his own form of world domination, that having Trump onside, being seen with him at his inauguration, at Spain's lifting of the trophy in New York, would grant him immunity against any opposition; that to doubt Infantino would by extension be to doubt the president of the United States.

Trump, though, is not as popular as he would like you to think and across the globe he is widely considered to be erratic, dangerous or just plainly unsuited to a job that requires deft diplomacy. It did not occur to any Uefa spokesman that, oh dear, we might be annoying "the Donald" if we don't back selling off the World Cup.

There is much to hate about what

Stance of each confederation

Uefa (Europe, 55 Fifa members)
President: Aleksander Ceferin
All 55 European nations agreed to boycott Fifa competitions until the Infantino proposal is withdrawn.

Concacaf (North and Central America and Caribbean, 35)
President: Victor Montagliani
They unanimously rejected Fifa's proposal in a meeting yesterday.

AFC (Asia, 46)
President: Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa
Al Khalifa said plans undermine "foundations of continental football". Their position is crucial given Uefa and Concacaf alone cannot block plans in a vote.

Conmebol (South America, 10)
President: Alejandro Domínguez
They have historically backed Infantino but are yet to comment.

Caf (Africa, 54)
President: Patrice Motsepe
African nations are key part of Infantino's power base and will meet next week to discuss plans.

OFC (Oceania, 11)
President: Lambert Maltock
Will discuss the plans in August and have given no indication as to whether they support them.

Exhausted and exasperated, Howe leaves as reality bites

Martin Hardy, Paul Joyce

At the start of the summer, Eddie Howe told the Newcastle hierarchy he had nothing left to give the club and he would be leaving.

He was told to go away, recharge his batteries and hopefully, in the eyes of the leadership, change his mind.

The 48-year-old was seen at that point as the solution, and not the problem, at a football club about to undergo a huge reboot, altering its future model and path. Just over two weeks ago, when asked if his opinion had changed, Howe — the first man to lead Newcastle to a domestic cup for 70 years — offered the same thought: that he was done. It was then that Newcastle's senior leadership team intensified their move for Matthias Jaissle, the Al-Ahli head coach they had been tracking for months, according to insiders.

Football moves fast.

The 38-year-old Jaissle, who has been at Al-Ahli in the Saudi Pro League since 2023, will be the next head coach of Newcastle and will join the club's first-team squad in La Manga.

It is uncertain whether Howe even said goodbye to the players at the club's training ground yesterday.

Newcastle have yet to announce that Howe has gone or that Jaissle will succeed him, having been taken by surprise as news broke of their interest in Jaissle. That too will come.

The departure of Howe is emphatically described in private by many sources as amicable. There will most likely be a settlement but not necessarily a payoff.

It is said that this is the right time, that it is Howe's decision to go, with no animosity, that his energy bank is empty. There is no other job being lined up.

For him, there was exhaustion last summer and then exasperation this year that his team were being ripped up. But there was not necessarily fury. Newcastle pushed themselves financially to breaking point to get here. This is simply the time when the credit card bills have landed.

Howe is thought to have been accepting of the need for a new, younger squad to be built, despite the blows of losing Alexander Isak, Anthony Gordon and Sandro Tonali. But there are no "what ifs". No sense at all that he was pushed.

Howe's three boys are settled in schools in Northumberland and play football for local boys' clubs. This has not been an easy call for him.

Last week Kevin Keegan died. This week Howe has left. There is perhaps a unique pressure, the relentlessness of a one-club city, that exhausted both men when they managed here.

Howe feared his tenure was coming to an end when a comment came from the Newcastle chief executive David Hopkinson in March about not having "a stance on his (Howe's) future".

Howe would not discuss his position with close friends that day before he was given assurances about the context and that the desire was to keep him on. By then Newcastle had lost 7-2 to Barcelona and suffered a second defeat of the season against Sunderland. More jeers followed that significant defeat.

It was a 58-game season, the second longest in Newcastle's history. By the end of it, Howe looked drained, and his exhausted side finished 12th in the table, a position that was not acceptable for anyone at the club.

The desire from above, however, was for him to stay. But their back-up plan was at another Saudi Arabia Public Investment Fund-owned club in the form of Jaissle. Sources insist that is a coincidence.

They also insist the ambition of PIF, which is withdrawing its financial backing of LIV Golf this year, has not changed at Newcastle. But reality has.

Five years ago, thousands of fans celebrated outside St James' Park following the PIF

Howe ended Newcastle's 70-year wait for a major trophy at Wembley in 2025

JONATHAN ERNST /REUTERS

Infantino was elected as president of Fifa in 2016, inset, and was at the 2018 World Cup final with Vladimir Putin, above. He still found time to play, top, taking on Zico in a legends game in Morocco in 2023. Last year he presented Trump with Fifa's peace prize, left, during the draw for the 2026 World Cup

How 43 nations can spark vote of no confidence

Martyn Ziegler

Chief Sports Reporter

Gianni Infantino is facing the total collapse of his plan to sell off the World Cup, and now his own position as Fifa president is under serious threat.

Infantino opened Pandora's box, flew too close to the sun, jumped the shark and just about every other idiom in the book.

The plan to sell off a stake in the World Cup to private investors is dead in the water after Uefa's 55 nations unanimously declared that they would boycott all Fifa competitions. No investor, no matter how close they are to Infantino, will want to spend a fortune buying a slice of a competition in which Europe's top nations are not playing.

The only question is how, or if, Infantino can extricate himself from a mess of his own making.

The Swiss clearly totally underestimated the reaction his plan, drawn up in secret using connections in the United States close to Donald Trump's network, would provoke. Perhaps he had hoped to choose the time of the announcement of the investment scheme, only for The Times to reveal on Tuesday what was being planned.

On the surface it is difficult to understand Infantino's motives. Fifa has just reported record revenues from the 2026 World Cup, it has $4 billion (about £2.97 billion) in reserves and is under no pressure. Indeed, senior football figures believe if Fifa wanted to give the $40 million over four years to each of the 211 associations it promised for backing the sell-off, rather than $10 million, then it could do so and still maintain healthy reserves.

For those that have dealt with Infantino over the past few months, the motives have been more obvious. He has talked of "making some serious money after 2031", when he expected his final Fifa presidential term to end.

To some sources, the "Fifa Forward Enterprise" — a newly proposed $20 billion commercial subsidiary, introduced by Infantino, that would handle Fifa's tournaments with private investors in the background — was the vehicle for that ambition.

Except now 2031 looks deeply uncertain. If this were big business, Infantino would already be penning his resignation letter. But this is football, and he could still try to brazen it out.

Yet it is fair to say leading football administrators from around the world, not just Europe, have had their fill of Infantino. Any efforts to unseat him would probably develop over the next few days. He will also know that Uefa has its own blueprint for a global Nations League, involving top countries from around the world, that was developed in 2017 but never activated.

One avenue may be for Uefa to convene an emergency Fifa Congress and launch a vote of no confidence. Under article 25(4) of Fifa's statutes, it needs only 20 per cent of its membership (43 countries) for that to happen.

It may also be that an opponent comes forward as an anti-Infantino unifying force when he runs for election for a final term in March 2027.

Nasser Al-Khelaifi, the Paris Saint-Germain president, chairman of European Football Clubs and head of beIN Sports, is someone who would have Infantino shaking in his white trainers, if he could be persuaded to run. His representatives say he has no ambition to be Fifa president, and it will not happen, and some may feel his multiple roles are too many conflicts of interest.

Other potential candidates include Victor Montagliani, the Canadian who is the president of Concacaf, and the Asian Football Confederation president Sheikh Salman, who lost narrowly to Infantino in the 2016 Fifa election.

But what if Infantino remains defiant, goes ahead with the vote and attempts to hold Fifa tournaments without the Europeans? That is an even quicker road to disaster. To hark back to Infantino's infamous remark at a press conference before the Qatar World Cup: "Today, I feel like history."

the sale could mean. World Cups every two years or even annually, hydration breaks as standard, longer half-times, America hosting regularly and banning the concept of the draw. But we don't need to extrapolate, we don't need to flick through George Orwell's *1984*, yet again, we need to know only that Spain and Portugal voted to boycott the World Cup and Spain and Portugal are the co-hosts, alongside Morocco, of the very next tournament.

Yes, Mr Infantino, if a very big vested interest does not back you, then who, really, bar those nations for whom a windfall is too good to refuse, is going to stomach you staying in the job?

takeover. Talk then from club officials was of winning the Premier League in five years. Last December it was about "being in the debate about being the top club in the world" by 2030.

Newcastle finished 12th, even with Gordon, Tonali and another likely departee in Bruno Guimarães.

They broke Uefa financial rules and were fined. Gordon was sold to help deal with that. Tonali was sold to buy young players.

That was not the dream sold to those fans, one Newcastle have played to with huge spending. That has now stopped. The club's £335 million turnover is less than half of what it needs to be to win those promised league titles.

It is a gap too great to bridge. Targets were missed this summer for various reasons, most notably a lack of European football. Under sporting director Ross Wilson, and now Jaissle, Newcastle will present a different model, of buying young players, developing them and selling them on.

The mood among fans is confused; some loved Howe and stayed with him. For others, faith went last season. There is sadness at this unexpected end and frustration at the change of direction and the perceived drop in ambition.

To use a quote from Keegan when he threatened to leave in 1992 because of a lack of signings: "It's not like it said in the brochure."

Other issues persist.

No one has addressed whether the northeast of England could finance the corporate element of a much talked of new stadium that does not have complete funding to be built. The announcement of a new training ground is said to be close. But before all that, the club must build a new team, and fast.

Game one of the season, against Liverpool and Isak, is on August 23. Game two is against Tottenham Hotspur and Tonali.

Jaissle has three weeks to hit the ground running and lift the city's mood.

Arsenal close to agreeing £80m deal for midfielder Guimarães — and want £50m for Nwaneri

Arsenal have moved closer to agreeing a deal for Newcastle United's Bruno Guimarães worth in the region of £80 million including add-ons (Gary Jacob writes).

The 28-year-old midfielder is scheduled to report to Newcastle today before the squad fly out for their pre-season camp in La Manga, Spain. He was given three weeks off after playing for Brazil at the World Cup.

Newcastle privately expressed last week that they would reject a £70 million bid for Guimarães but have been in talks about signing the Botafogo midfielder Danilo. He spent two seasons at Nottingham Forest before moving to the Brazilian club, who are expecting offers from European sides of about £25 million.

Arsenal have been willing to spend big on elite players to support Mikel Arteta's desire to go to "a different dimension" after winning the Premier League title. He wants to strengthen in midfield with more technical players and he has looked at Guimarães in the past.

Last season Guimarães was Newcastle's top scorer in the league with nine goals, despite missing two months of the campaign through injury. He also claimed five assists in the Premier League. Newcastle paid Lyon £40 million for him in January 2022.

Arsenal have made two signings this summer — Christos Tzolis, the £34 million Greece winger, who replaces Leandro Trossard, and Illan Meslier, a reserve goalkeeper.

Newcastle sold Anthony Gordon to Barcelona for £69.3 million in May and Sandro Tonali to Tottenham Hotspur for up to £100 million this month. The big-name sales and frustration over Newcastle's transfer approach are partly what led to the departure of the head coach Eddie Howe, whose exit was announced yesterday. Newcastle begin their Premier League season at home to Liverpool on August 23.

Meanwhile, Ethan Nwaneri has attracted interest from Borussia Dortmund and AC Milan. Arsenal want as much as £50 million for the 19-year-old midfielder, who came through their academy.

Nwaneri played only 165 minutes in the Premier League last season before joining Marseille on loan in January.

Guimarães is wanted by Arsenal

No half-time show could make up for Europe's absent stars

How 2026 World Cup would have looked without Europe

J BELLINGHAM (ENGLAND) 7
E HAALAND (NORWAY) 7
K MBAPPÉ (FRANCE) 10 GOALS
L MESSI (ARGENTINA) 8

James Gheerbrant

Carve up the moon and we'll pack up the stars. That is the message that the football federations of Europe have spoken with one voice. Forty-nine hours after Gianni Infantino's brazen plot to sell off the World Cup was revealed by my colleague Martyn Ziegler, the continent that founded the tournament, invented the game, has supplied nine of the past 12 finalists and still has the lion's share of the best players, was moved, at long last, to step into its own power. Its warning now teeters on the fulcrum of history. It will be remembered either as the threat which held a megalomaniac in check, or the promise which pulled a sport apart. There are two ways this can end now: with Infantino, humbled, stepping back from the brink; or in schism, secession, the game's great golden show reduced to a hollow shell.

If the members of Uefa are forced to follow through on their ultimatum, the World Cup will enter a new era with no Spain, no France, no England, no Germany, no Portugal, no Netherlands, no Norway. Imagine a World Cup without Kylian Mbappé, Lamine Yamal, Erling Haaland, Jude Bellingham, Rodri, Michael Olise, Pau Cubarsi. Imagine a women's World Cup without Aitana Bonmatí, Mariona Caldentey, Alessia Russo, Ewa Pajor, Caroline Graham Hansen, Klara Bühl. What exactly would you be left with? An event shadowed by ghosts, with only the flimsiest pretence to crowning the world's best. A spectacle of gaps and absences, plugged with half-time shows, commercial schmaltz, influencer slop.

The word "boycott" brings back memories of the Olympic Games of the 1970s and 1980s. In Moscow, in 1980, 65 nations, including the United States, West Germany and Japan, declined to participate — between them, they had accounted for 71 per cent of the medals won at the previous Olympics in 1976.

If Europe pulls out of the World Cup, the effect will be similar. The show may go on, the trophy and the medals may be handed out, the champions may take their place in the record books. But everyone will know, and everyone will remember, that a greater weight of talent lies outside the competition than within, that the title no longer truly confers global supremacy.

Game Podcast

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This is not the death knell for football. But it is the division bell. Uefa, led by Infantino's arch-enemy Aleksander Ceferin, and Concacaf, who said its members unanimously oppose the proposals, have made a stand. There are several things at stake: not only the creep of private investment into a sacred temple, but also the stealthy Americanisation of football, the prospect of more interference by the wealthy and the powerful, and, given that most suspect that Infantino's endgame is a biennial or even annual World Cup, the issue of player welfare. US Soccer, one of the 41 Concacaf members, are to be applauded for taking a stand against not only Infantino but their own government. The challenge has been laid down. Now we wait, and hope that the man who would sell the world, the man who would sweat one of sport's priceless assets and then sweat it some more for good measure, will, as he ponders the implications of a European breakaway, himself be made to sweat.

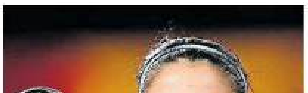
Let us play out both the scenarios that are on the table. What the Uefa nations are hoping for is that their threat resounds, Fifa's plan is shelved, the World Cup remains a global tournament. This is, after all, a scheme bound up in American money, American politics, American values. Americans see sport through a much more individualistic lens than we do in Europe. For them, it is very much about superstars. And in front of their noses, Mbappé, Haaland, Bellingham, Rodri, Yamal, Lionel Messi and Harry Kane have just made it very clear that they are the best football players on the planet.

Messi is coming to the end and the others are all from Europe. Investors understand the value of power and fame. They understand that the withdrawal of those things leads to a devaluing of the product. Perhaps that logic will prevail.

There are, of course, a lot of reasons to hope that it does. Most obviously because of all the European players and fans who dream of beating the world and lifting the cup. Taking that dream away would be devastating. And for the female footballers of Europe, for whom international football is a much more crucial part of their income stream than it is for the men, taking away next summer's World Cup would potentially be more damaging still. They will be watching this situation on tenterhooks.

Not everything about this scenario is good, though. If Uefa wins this one and Fifa's plan is shelved, Infantino will have had a warning, but not a reckoning. There is a danger that Fifa will hear, just as some of Europe's big clubs did after the failure of the Super League, "not now", rather than "no". The can will be kicked down the road. The ground that Fifa has already won — the hydration breaks, the absurd gerrymandering of the World Cup-hosting bid process to favour Saudi Arabia — will not be ceded. We will still be inside the tent, with all the foul smells that that entails, still holding our nose.

What about the other possible reality? What if Infantino doesn't step back from the brink? Perhaps he reasons that he can do without one continent, even the one that has historically been the bedrock of the sport. His presidency has been pitched at the other continents, the African and Asian confederations in particular. Even a Europe-less World Cup would still be watched around the world, would still generate wealth. Maybe just goes ahead and does it anyway. What if he does? What if the great polar ice shelf of world football splinters, and carves a lonely iceberg into an uncharted sea?



A women's World Cup held without Spain great Bonmatí is unthinkable

Presumably, the Uefa member nations would play a European championship every two years instead of every four. Maybe we'd get used to it eventually. The optimistic reading is that it would end up like World Series cricket, where a compromise was reached and the global game came back together, or the PDC/BDO split in darts, where the talent on one side weighs so heavy that the exodus becomes inexorable. But there are no guarantees that that would be the case. Maybe international football would become more like boxing: disparate bodies, different prizes, the best seldom meeting the best.

Football, and its most famous competition, now faces a defining moment in its rich history. By coincidence, Uefa's statement was issued 60 years to the day that England played West Germany in the World Cup final of 1966. From that match, Geoff Hurst, Willi Schulz, Wolfgang Weber, Wolfgang Overath and Siggi Held are still alive.

I found myself thinking of those great men, wondering what they thought, seeing their nations stand, as the Football Association put it, "shoulder to shoulder". Europe's readiness to stand up to Fifa bespeaks the same truth imprinted on our collective consciousness that day by their muddy-shirted, empty-lunged heroics: the World Cup is something so special as to be worth fighting for.

World Cup's hosts in 2030 join boycott

CONTINUED FROM BACK

be used for development. In a statement, Uefa said: "We unanimously and unequivocally reject Fifa's proposal to transfer ownership interests in the World Cup and other Fifa competitions to private investors."

It added: "The World Cup is not for sale. This is not a 'democratic decision', but governance by intimidation — an act of coercion unworthy of an institution entrusted with the stewardship of the global game."

The next World Cup matches involving European nations are scheduled for as soon as October 9, when Uefa's 2027 Women's World Cup qualifying play-offs begin. England are meant to play their first leg against Greece on this date, while Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Ireland are also in the play-offs. The 2027 Women's World Cup will be hosted by Brazil. There is also a Women's Under-20 World Cup beginning on September 5, with a Uefa nation, Poland, hosting the tournament. England are one of the six European participants.

The men's World Cup in 2030 is due to be hosted by the holders Spain, Portugal and Morocco. Spain and Portugal would therefore be boycotting their own tournament if Infantino goes ahead with his plan.

An FA statement read: "We stand shoulder to shoulder with our European colleagues and fully support the collective view. We oppose Fifa's plans. The Fifa World Cup belongs to football and always will."

Uefa's stance was also supported by the UK government. Lisa Nandy, the culture secretary, said: "Football belongs to the fans, not billionaire investors. Enough is enough. It's time to take a stand to protect our game."

There was another significant blow to Infantino's ambitions when Sheikh Salman, the president of the Asian Football Confederation, wrote to his 47 members expressing "great concern and disappointment" at the lack of consultation from Fifa.

He wrote: "Furthermore, the AFC is deeply concerned that Fifa's unilateral actions appear to undermine the very foundations of continental football, which are based on solidarity, co-operation and transparency. Moreover, such an initiative will not succeed without the support of all the confederations, which is not the case now."

European football's leaders spelt out that they believed the future of international football was at stake after what many saw as little more than bribery by Infantino.

In his letter to the associations, Infantino said a decision on allowing private investors to buy stakes in the World Cup must be taken by September 19. He said that a funding package totalling $10 billion (about £7.5 billion) would become available if associations sign up — with each association receiving $40 million — but if they reject it their earnings would be $2.7 billion, almost 75 per cent less.

The Times revealed Infantino's plan on Tuesday, sparking a furious backlash.

Sources have claimed that Infantino would be lined up to run the company, called Fifa Forward Enterprise, as a commissioner once his final presidential term expires in 2031. The salary for that position has not been confirmed but figures with knowledge of the plan said it would be on a par with that of the NFL chief commissioner, who earns about $64 million a year, ten times as much as Infantino.

Uefa said on Wednesday: "Fifa cannot continue to use our sport to enrich themselves and their friends. We can grow the game correctly. It's time to prioritise associations, clubs, leagues, players and fans."

Infantino's letter to associations, which has been seen by The Times, says: "The decision on whether or not to proceed with this proposal belongs entirely to you. Should you wish to proceed this $10 billion package will become available as of January 1, 2027, ushering in the next phase of our journey together.

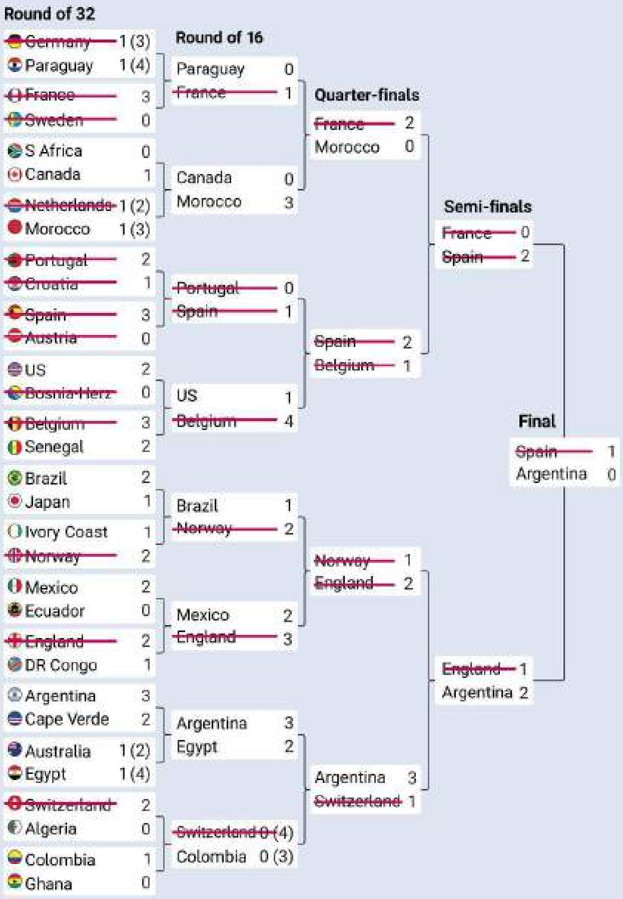
"Should you wish to retain the status quo and reject this proposal we still have our planned expansion of the Forward programme [development money] of $2.7 billion as previously presented. In total for the upcoming cycle starting as of January 1, 2027 each member association will have the possibility of access up to $40 million per member association under this proposal."

It has also been pointed out that Fifa's financial reserves of $4 billion mean that the extra cash could — and should — be given to national associations anyway, rather than using the private investors' money.

Under the plan, which was hatched by Infantino with a small clique of Fifa executives, it would retain power over international football including, significantly, the international match calendar after 2030, but its decisions would have huge influence on the fortunes of the new company. If Fifa expanded the World Cup from 48 to 64 teams, or held the competition more regularly than every four years, that would boost the financial value of the company as it should mean increased revenues — though some figures believe expansion does not necessarily increase profits. It would also add pressure for tournaments to be held in the most lucrative markets — such as the United States, one of three co-hosts for this summer's tournament.

Infantino was at a Throne Day event in Morocco yesterday

O DEMBÉLÉ (FRANCE) 6
H KANE (ENGLAND) 6



Round of 32

~~Germany~~	1 (3)
Paraguay	1 (4)
~~France~~	3
~~Sweden~~	0
S Africa	0
Canada	1
~~Netherlands~~	1 (2)
Morocco	1 (3)
~~Portugal~~	2
~~Croatia~~	1
~~Spain~~	3
~~Austria~~	0
US	2
~~Bosnia-Herz~~	0
~~Belgium~~	3
Senegal	2
Brazil	2
Japan	1
Ivory Coast	1
~~Norway~~	2
Mexico	2
Ecuador	0
~~England~~	2
DR Congo	1
Argentina	3
Cape Verde	2
Australia	1 (2)
Egypt	1 (4)
~~Switzerland~~	2
Algeria	0
Colombia	1
Ghana	0

Round of 16

Paraguay	0
~~France~~	1
Canada	0
Morocco	3
~~Portugal~~	0
~~Spain~~	1
US	1
~~Belgium~~	4
Brazil	1
~~Norway~~	2
Mexico	2
~~England~~	3
Argentina	3
Egypt	2
~~Switzerland 0~~	(4)
Colombia	0 (3)

Quarter-finals

~~France~~	2
Morocco	0
~~Spain~~	2
~~Belgium~~	1
~~Norway~~	1
~~England~~	2
Argentina	3
~~Switzerland~~	1

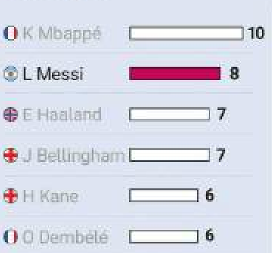
Semi-finals

~~France~~	0
~~Spain~~	2
~~England~~	1
Argentina	2

Final

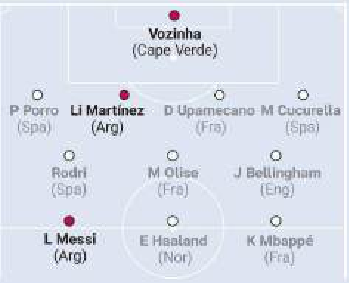
~~Spain~~	1
Argentina	0

Golden boot



K Mbappé	10
L Messi	8
E Haaland	7
J Bellingham	7
H Kane	6
O Dembélé	6

Team of the tournament (4-3-3)



The Uefa statement in full

Uefa and its national associations will not participate in Fifa competitions. Uefa and its 55 member associations stand as one. We unanimously and unequivocally reject Fifa's proposal to transfer ownership interests in the World Cup and other Fifa competitions to private investors. The World Cup cannot be treated as an investment product. It is one of football's greatest sporting legacies. It has been built over generations by players, national teams and supporters across every continent. No part of it should ever be surrendered to private investors. The World Cup is not for sale. It is both irresponsible and indefensible that a proposal of such significance for football was conceived in secret and brought to the brink of approval without any meaningful consultation with those entrusted with stewarding the game. This is not merely a profound failure of leadership, but an abdication of Fifa's duty as the custodian of world football. National associations around the world are now presented with an ultimatum: accept the irreversible capture of football's greatest competitions or bear the consequences. This is not a "democratic decision", but governance by intimidation — an act of coercion unworthy of an institution entrusted with the stewardship of the global game. But our opposition goes far beyond process. The moment external investors acquire ownership interests in Fifa competitions, football changes forever. Commercial return becomes a permanent obligation. Investor expectations become a daily pressure. From that moment onwards, every decision on the international calendar, every decision on competition formats and every decision shaping the future of football is no longer driven by what best serves the game, but by what best serves shareholders. This model has no place in world football. Football's future cannot be dictated by the expectations of those whose first duty is to maximise financial return. Nor can the interests of national associations, leagues, clubs, players and supporters become subordinate to investor returns. Football cannot mortgage its future for financial gain. Europe's position is clear. We will never lend this model our legitimacy. No one has the moral authority to sell what they merely hold in trust for the next generation. As a result of today's discussion, no Uefa national teams will participate in any Fifa competition for so long as these proposals remain alive, unless this proposal has been abandoned in its entirety and binding assurances have been given that Fifa will never again open its governance or competitions to private ownership. Nobody should be in any doubt: Uefa and its national associations will oppose these plans with absolute determination. There are moments when institutions are judged not by what they are prepared to accept, but by what they refuse to compromise. This is one of those moments. Some things are simply too important to sell. The Fifa World Cup belongs to football. It always will. And so long as Europe has a voice, it will never be for sale.

Sport

World Cup boycott

All European nations to withdraw from Fifa competitions over Infantino's sell-off plan

Martyn Ziegler

Chief Sports Reporter

England and the other European members of Uefa will boycott Fifa tournaments if Gianni Infantino goes ahead with his plan to sell stakes in the World Cup to private investors.

The unanimous decision was taken at a crisis meeting of Uefa's 55 member nations, held virtually, to discuss the hugely controversial sell-off plans.

It came on the 60th anniversary of England's World Cup win in 1966 and is likely to trigger the collapse of Infantino's scheme — he had told Fifa's 211 associations they only have until September 19 to sign up or face financial consequences.

Infantino's plan was dealt a further blow when Concacaf, which represents North and Central America and the Caribbean, later said its 41 nations would reject the proposal, adding that "football's future — and its greatest asset [the World Cup] — must remain in the hands of our football family".

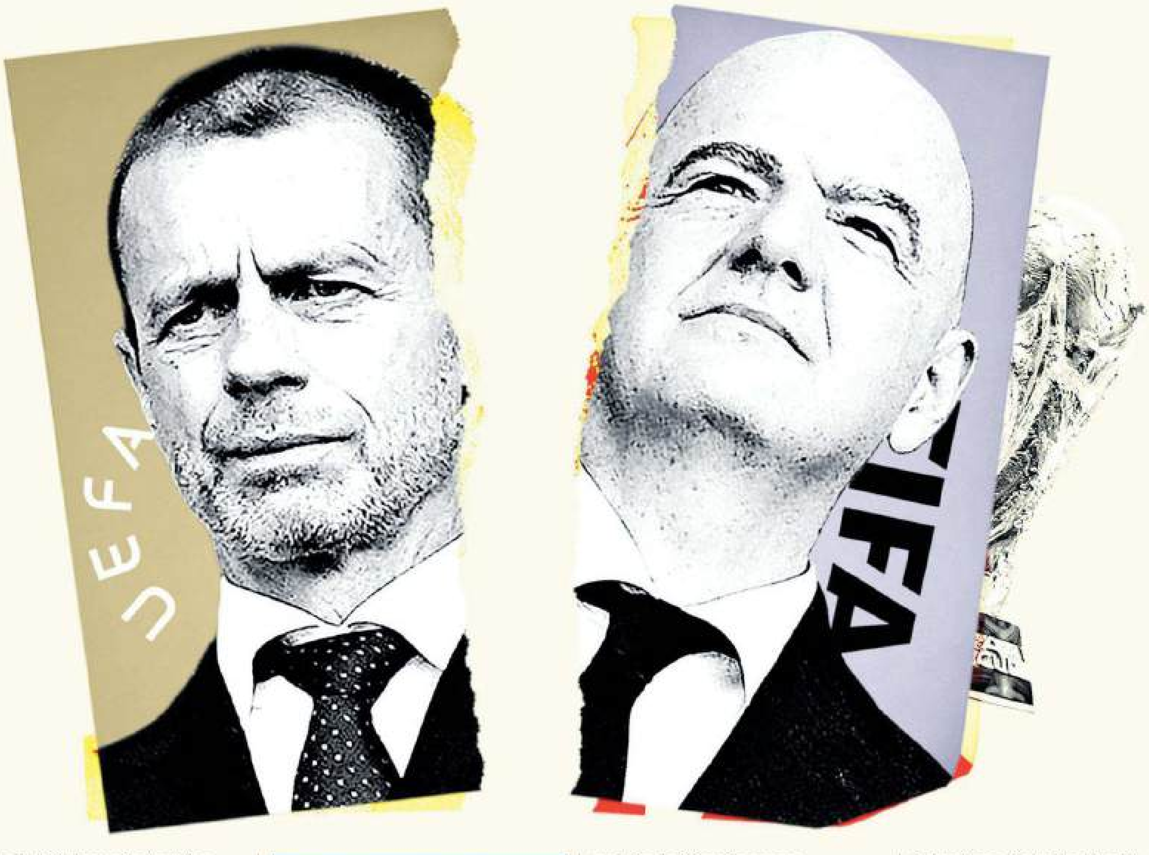
However, the confederation stopped short of boycotting the tournament.

The prospect of the men's and women's World Cups, and other tournaments, being played without the European nations would essentially kill the project, as the investors would face buying stakes in a competition that would not involve most of the best teams.

The Uefa meeting was chaired by its president, Aleksander Ceferin, and the decision is seen as potentially being one of the significant moments in Fifa's chequered history.

Alyson Rudd Deluded Infantino must go, page 60

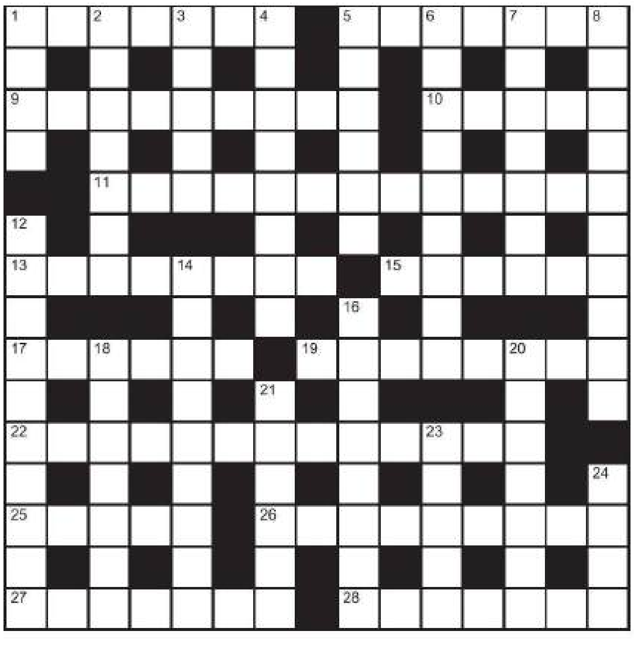
James Gheerbrant Europe's stars hold all aces, page 62



It is understood that representatives from more than 40 federations, including the FA, spoke at the virtual meeting. One source said there was "total unanimity" and "lots of anger" at how they had been treated and why Fifa reserves cannot

Continued on page 63

Times Crossword 29,609



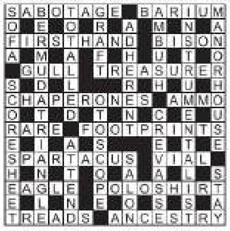
ACROSS

1 Sleeping partner may be in this close relationship (7)
5 I'm surprised, not having left, that woman had cheated (7)
9 Article on equality splitting support for divisive regime (9)
10 Sound of bottle made from aluminium? (5)
11 Granting authority to religious campaign during Advent (13)
13 Danger sign induced Conservatives to switch leaders (3,5)
15 Trainee barrister's conclusion pretty much determined cases (6)
17 An American transfixed by writer's hostility (6)
19 Cast wicked character as her? (3-5)
22 One ultimately formed number involved in new organisation? (7,6)
25 Passed out (5)
26 Fairness of moral views (4,5)
27 Did substitute put up with row after losing head? (5,2)
28 Innovation of four distinct points separated by three more (7)

DOWN

1 Showing skill having no weak components? (4)
2 Looked for a second church seen in good light (7)
3 For these people, taking heroin is a fetish (5)
4 Faculty certainly entertained by people rowing (8)
5 Women's top that is least likely to fit? (6)
6 Parodied an old poem in a funny way (9)
7 Special means of receiving stolen stock? (7)
8 International cap making comeback gradually, with great effort (10)
12 Eats early and extravagantly during holidays (10)
14 First person sister went out with could be in deep water (9)
16 What crammer may do — help to get into Oxford? (8)
18 Route changed after during and before delivery (2,5)
20 Long-winded book, half of which is boring poetry (7)
21 Big Bang possibly boosted part of UK banking system (6)
23 US author deleting line in book, subsequently? (5)
24 Given the circumstances, foundation has to let leader go (2,2)

Yesterday's solution 29,608



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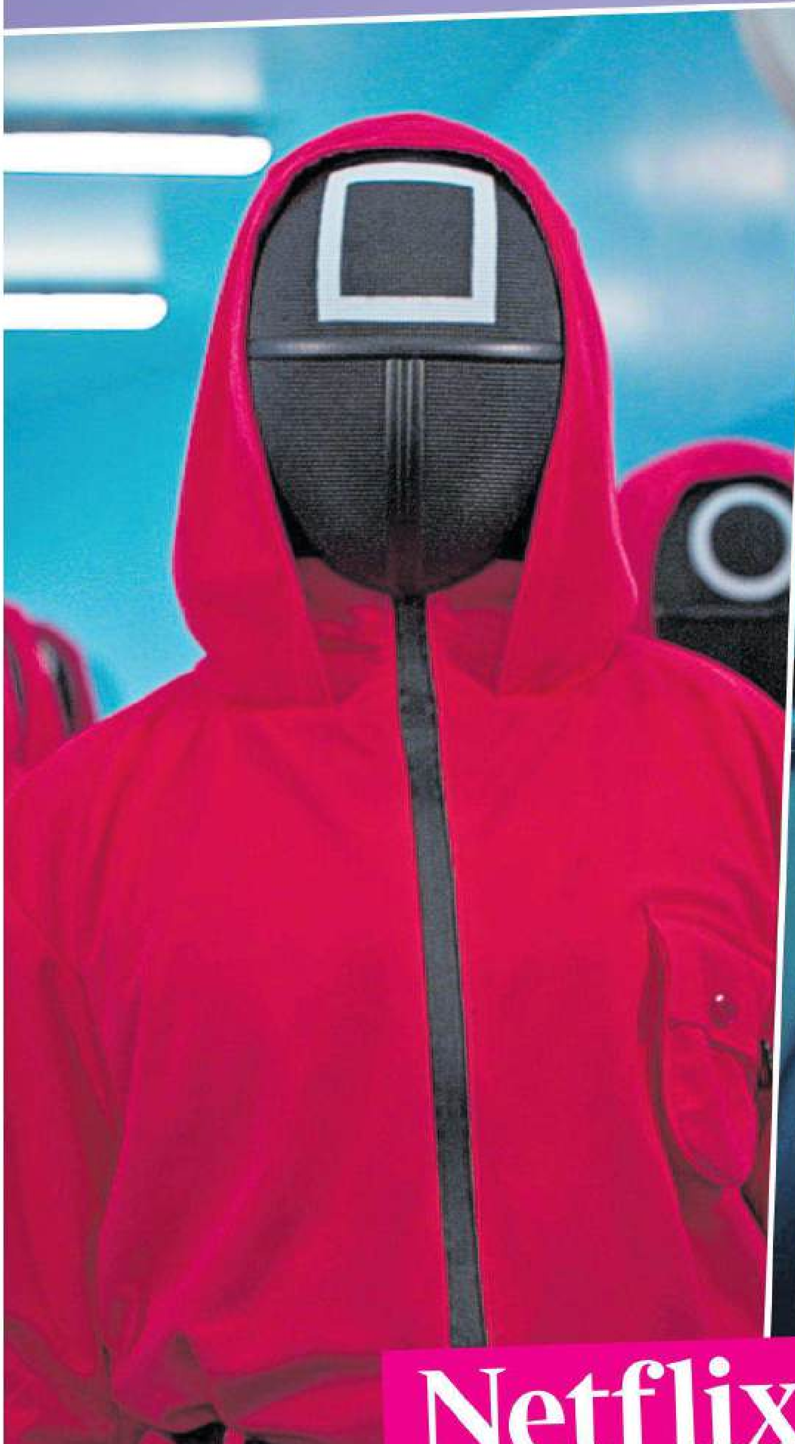
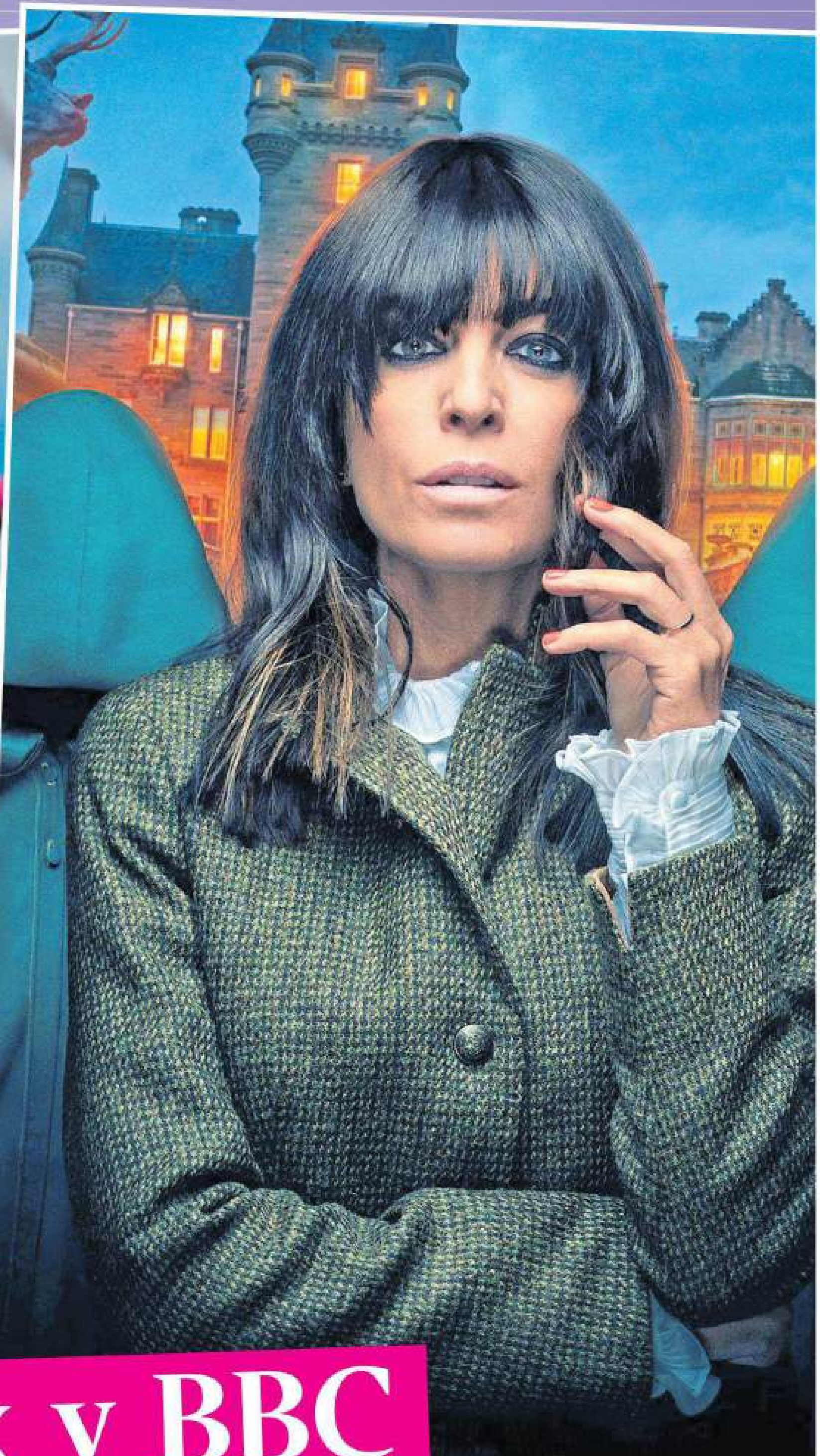
THE TIMES

2 ARTS

July 31 | 2026





Netflix v BBC

Which is really best?

TV critic Ben Dowell on the new screen wars

the arts column

Richard Morrison

Believe it or not, this ingenious Peter Pan plan could save the arts

What would you say to a scheme that raised millions for our beleaguered arts organisations, cost taxpayers nothing and didn't depend on the whims of private donors or corporate sponsors? Too good to be true? Well, I have pondered Jamie Njoku-Goodwin's ingenious idea for several days now and can't see why it wouldn't work, except that it requires the government to do a bit of thinking outside the box — always a big ask.

Njoku-Goodwin, a sparky 35-year-old who has divided his time between music industry jobs and Tory party politics (he was Rishi Sunak's director of strategy during his final months in No 10), has been thinking about copyright, and particularly about *Peter Pan*. In a unique act of philanthropy back in 1929 JM Barrie gifted the copyright in his most celebrated play to Great Ormond Street Hospital. When that copyright expired in 1987 the government moved swiftly to grant GOSH a perpetual right to royalties from any public performance, commercial publication or adaptation of *Peter Pan* in the UK. Thanks to that far-sighted move tens of millions of pounds have been raised to care for sick children.

Njoku-Goodwin's argument is that this established a precedent. If parliament could extend the royalty stream of Barrie's masterpiece to fund a good cause, could it not apply the same mechanism to other works, especially if those royalties were channelled into funding the arts at a time when so many other funding strands are vanishing?

In particular he cites two potential candidates for this treatment: the great British composers Ralph Vaughan Williams and Benjamin Britten, whose copyrights are due to expire (the statutory 70 years after their deaths) in 2028 and 2046 respectively. What makes them apt choices is that royalties from performances of their music entirely go to two charities vital to the UK's musical life: the Vaughan Williams Foundation, which supports music education and the performance of British music; and Britten Pears Arts, which has turned the Snape Maltings in Suffolk into a dynamic centre for music.

MANUEL HARLAN/RSC

Wendy and Peter Pan at the Barbican last year

Under Njoku-Goodwin's plan parliament would extend the Britten and Vaughan Williams copyrights. So rather than winding up their charitable operations in 2029 and 2047 respectively, the trusts created in their names could carry on using royalties to support their work.

But his proposal goes further. If the music of Vaughan Williams and Britten could continue generating royalties to support our arts scene in perpetuity, why not apply the same treatment to other British cultural giants whose copyrights expire in the next couple of decades? He cites as examples such figures as CS Lewis (out of copyright in 2034), Ian Fleming (2035), Noël Coward (2044), JRR Tolkien (2044) and Agatha Christie (2047).

> “ Royalties could be channelled into funding the arts

Of course when you move into the exalted realm of authors such as those, whose stories are constantly adapted for film and TV, the fundraising potential suddenly increases by several significant noughts. Although Britten's operas and concert works are still widely performed, the income they generate for Britten Pears Arts is less than £2 million a year. Compare that with the bidding war between Amazon and Netflix for the TV rights to *The Lord of the Rings*, which ended with Amazon paying a reputed $250 million to the Tolkien estate.

If Njoku-Goodwin's scheme were extended to include some of those big-earning authors after their copyrights expired, he envisages the earned royalties going into an independently governed “cultural endowment fund” administered by one of the existing rights-collecting organisations. The fund would then make grants to worthy cultural causes. There would be nothing compulsory about the scheme; the estates of distinguished authors would be invited to opt in when their respective copyrights ran out. But why would they refuse, if they were losing their royalty streams anyway?

Drawbacks? I can think of a few. One is that the scheme would presumably involve the dubious pleasure of setting up a kind of alternative Arts Council to choose which creative giants should have their copyrights extended and who benefits from the subsequent royalties. Another is that such a scheme, however well meant, would breach a fundamental principle: that once a creative artist's heirs have benefited from their work for a reasonable period (the 70-year rule), everything should go into the public domain for the free enjoyment of humanity.

But such gentlemanly notions of copyright are already being flouted. Think of Disney's ferocious legal battle over several decades to retain control of Mickey Mouse, almost a century after the figure was created. Or the American tech companies shamelessly breaching millions of copyrights every day to train their AI programs. A striking feature of Njoku-Goodwin's scheme is that copyright would be deployed for the public good, rather than to line corporate or private pockets.

A knottier question is how this proposal would sit legally within the Berne Convention, the longstanding international treaty by which member countries (181 at present) agree to respect each other's copyright laws. Njoku-Goodwin says that the perpetual *Peter Pan* copyright has never been challenged internationally. But I wonder how Hollywood would feel about paying royalties to film, say, a new Agatha Christie adaptation after her copyright had expired, just because the UK government says it should?

Still, the broad thrust of Njoku-Goodwin's scheme seems admirable. It's not just that it would raise millions each year without imposing another burden on the public purse. It's also the symbolic aspect. Giants such as Britten and Vaughan Williams shared a belief that creative artists should be rooted in their communities and enrich ordinary lives. Both would have been delighted (as well as bemused) if they had been told that, a century or more after their deaths, their works would still be playing a vital part in keeping the nation's cultural life going.

Oxbridge has a problem with ‘handsy’ men

Gillian Tett, provost of King's College, Cambridge, tells **Andrew Billen** that she feels profound pain for students who were sexually harassed by professors

Three years ago, when the Financial Times columnist Gillian Tett left her senior management job at the paper to become the head of King's (you know, as in Christmas carols from King's), the new provost of Cambridge University's most recognisable college had her own agenda. As the journalist whose book had claimed the 2008 financial crash was caused as much by teams not talking to one another as greed, she wanted to address the culture of academics working in what sociologists call “silos”.

“Disgusted” by government cuts, she vowed to fight for the humanities in universities generally. King's, after all, was a progressive college, home for Alan Turing, the brilliant homosexual computer scientist, an early recruiter of female students, and about to get 438 solar panels added to the roof of its famous medieval chapel.

Then in April this year she opened The Times. There she discovered that an inquiry by external investigators had determined Simon Goldhill, 69, a professor of Greek culture and literature at King's, had sexually harassed a student in her twenties and admitted to kissing her in an “over-exuberant” and “no doubt slobbery” fashion. He resigned last month; the college is still investigating.

Goldhill was not the college's sole recent rotten apple. Last year Herbert Huppert, its now 82-year-old and very ex-emeritus professor of geophysics, was stripped of his college fellowship after a series of complaints of harassment, inappropriate touching and sexualised language. The university had placed restrictions on him in 2018; it seems it had informed someone at King's but the message had not been passed on.

Provost Tett is in New York, where, with dual American citizenship, she spends her summers, rising early to keep BST business hours. “I did not imagine for a millisecond that I'd be dealing with unseemly behaviour when I arrived,” she tells me on Zoom. “I really didn't. I had lived through MeToo in New York. It was bruising and brutal and it just didn't really occur to me that one would have to start talking about this stuff here.”

The bad behaviour is, she hastens to add, confined to a “teeny-tiny” minority. “And there's a really strong commitment across the board to trying to create a better environment.” She cannot talk about Goldhill because of the college investigation. So I ask whether she has apologised to the complainants in the Huppert case.

“Obviously I've spoken to all aspects of people who were part of that saga. I have indicated my profound pain for what they went through, both inside the college, at internal events and personally as well. I've thanked them for their bravery in coming forward.”

Is it legally difficult for her to apologise? “Well, first of all, in a sense I can't apologise because I wasn't around when a lot of these incidents happened. But it's not about the legal aspect. Frankly, it's about being a human. I feel passionately about just trying to be human about this and saying, listen, some of the things that have happened in the past have been unacceptable and unfortunate and I know it's caused real pain and damage. It's tragic. It's tragic all round.”

All round? She means primarily for the victims, but also for the collective reputation of countless blameless academics. Tragic for the perpetrators too: “Older people who grew up in a world where this was regarded as normal, normalised, and essentially enabled for years, and who just can't see how suddenly attitudes and expectations have changed.”

The big thing about Tett, a former colleague of hers at the FT tells me, is she was not just a story-getting journalist, but an anthropologist, social anthropology being her doctorate subject at Cambridge in the Eighties.

She once wrote that almost everywhere she looked there was “fragmentation and tribalism and tunnel-vision”. It sounds like a good description of the Oxbridge system, I say: independent colleges that amorphously form a university with a separate governance.

“Yes. Whether it's a financial crisis or whether it's a corporate scandal, nine times out of ten, from experience, it's not because you have a bunch of people trying to be deliberately stupid or mad or greedy even. It's because they're trapped in a system whereby there's such a silo problem in terms of how people operate and think that the right hand doesn't know what the left hand's doing.”

Unexpectedly, she says that a Times

STEPHEN BOND

Gillian Tett

podcast series, *The Feud,* I made a few years ago about the behaviour of an Oxford college trying to fire its head, "really woke people up to the question of governance".

Yet while Christ Church, Oxford, was extremely hesitant about talking to me (their lawyers were less shy), here is Tett speaking to the very paper that exposed to its readers the miscreants at her college. She says she understands colleges keeping out of the public eye, but is from a different tradition. "For what it's worth, I'm a passionate believer in accountability and responsibility and transparency."

In February she wrote in the FT about the report into the 1986 Space Shuttle Challenger disaster. It talked of the "social normalisation of deviance". Is that what we have at King's?

"I mean the kind of phrases that have been used in Oxford and Cambridge is that when a student has said to somebody, 'I don't like the way he's behaving,' the phrase that comes back is, 'Oh, he's just a bit handsy.'

"Students tell other students how to cope with a handsy professor and create coping strategies. And that's what a lot of women in Oxford and Cambridge have been doing. They've been creating coping strategies for a very long time. On one level, they have coped as a result, many of them, but it shouldn't be that way because not everyone copes and it normalises behaviour that needs to change."

When Tett joined the FT in 1993 it had almost no senior women journalists (today its editor is a woman); the culture was "hard-bitten" and hard-drinking. It was while working for the paper in New York during the MeToo moment that she began to review her experiences.

"There was this television presenter called Charlie Rose. The very first time I ever went to lunch with him — I was doing a *Lunch with the FT* interview — he tried to pick me up. And I said to him, 'Charlie, the tape recorder's whirring. What are you doing?' And it's part of the male entitlement thing. He just laughed it off and kept going. But because I had power and privilege, I was able to basically send him off. I had years of experience basically saying, 'F*** off.' So he then stopped."

> "We all have blind spots and we just can't see what's happening to other people sometimes

Indeed, she later invited him to some safely big dinner parties. He was "just Charlie". But when MeToo happened (he was one of its casualties) she realised she had a blind spot.

"Younger women around me were not able to just say, 'F*** off!' They did not have sharp elbows. It was hard for them and I should have been much more empathetic. I guess one of the key things that I'm trying to say is that this isn't about throwing stones or blaming people and finger-pointing. It's about the fact that we have this cultural change happening. We're all creatures of our own environment and we all tend to see the world that we grew up with as normal. We all have blind spots and blinkers and we just can't see what's happening to other people sometimes.

"I'm a passionate believer that cancel culture is wrong. I think that very, very strongly. Let he who is without sin cast the first stone, and all that. We're all living in grey zones and are flawed, and there has to be a way for us to learn collectively and move forward without finger-pointing and blame because the bigger goal is not retribution, revenge, blah, blah, blah, or anything like that. The bigger goal is to change social attitudes as a whole."

While we wait for a transformation, she has appointed a senior barrister to oversee an independent review of King's practices and culture. Its students are holding their own inquiry, which pleases her. Despite some opposition, academics will soon join service staff in working under the aegis of the college's human resources department.

Arriving in Cambridge as an outsider brings an obvious advantage because, as a favourite Chinese proverb reminds her, the fish do not see the water they swim in. She is also 59, and has a spectacular career in journalism and book writing. "If it all blows up and goes badly wrong, I have other bits of my life."

Marking her down as an optimist, I was surprised to read that she expected to die a "spinster".

"Actually, when I say I am an optimist, that's because I was very happily single." To her surprise, however, in 2021 she met Henrik Jones, founder of Buckhill Capital.

They married in the solar-panelled chapel three years later. Together they have three children. Two are hers by a former partner: one newly graduated and working at a New York bank, the other studying medicine in London. Her experience as provost, and I pray as a mother, suggests university life is actually getting safer.

"It often just takes one or two brave people to stand up and speak and suddenly it's like a snowball starting an avalanche," she says.

But there is something she must add. "There are cases of young men being harassed as well." By female academics? "Not usually."

And, I say, I thought we were ending on an optimistic note. "We are," Tett replies. "The optimistic note is that we're talking about it."

BACKGRID

Jennifer Aniston on a yacht near Mallorca

Do you hardcore holiday like Jennifer Aniston...

... or are you a slob in the summer? Here's Shane Watson's guide to help you find out

Here's a picture of Jennifer Aniston, 57, doing a plank in a bikini on a yacht off Mallorca, as you do. Or don't. How you approach a week or two in the sun is fast becoming the new summer divide.

Do you look at a picture like this and think, heaven: those lucky people with their fabulous lives, re-energising and healing? Or do you skim over it, vaguely wondering if Jen's having enough fun these days, and then get back to ruminating on whether to have the iced coffee with the whipped cream topping? Are you, in short, a Hardcore Holidaymaker, like Aniston, or a Summer Slob? Here's how to tell the difference, if you really don't know.

How you pack

Hardcores take walking shoes and exercise gear. And swimming goggles. In fact goggles may be the fastest route to outing a Hardcore because no one needs these unless they're doing laps before everyone's awake, certainly before breakfast. Slobs pack far too much, bar exercise-related kit, and end up walking to the local taverna in rubby flip-flops or new gladiator sandals.

Attitude to WFH (H = holiday)

Hardcores prefer to put in a little work, every day at an allocated time, so they stay on top of stuff, so Cherry doesn't get her feet under the table, and because they have office-related fomo. Slobs have not brought laptops (er, they're on holiday) and may check their phones but only to see if the kids are watering the plants and to peruse swimwear on sale. A Slob will go tonto if work dares to contact them, whereas Hardcores secretly love it and will put their phone on speaker and pace around like a character in *Succession*.

Attitude to alcohol

Not saying Aniston isn't having a cheeky caipirinha now and then, but she isn't gently glugging rosé at lunchtime. What's the worst thing that could happen on a Slob holiday, other than an encroaching wildfire, someone being sick in the pool, the loos blocking (especially on a boat)? It's the drink running out. Milk for coffee would be bad too. Hardcores wouldn't care. And they don't take milk.

Sightseeing and activities

Hardcores will have a plan for every day, and the appropriate footwear. Slobs are not philistines and will be keen as mustard to see the amphitheatre, etc, so long as there's some kind of culinary or alcoholic reward factored in. They don't mind working for their supper — eg swimming to the restaurant, hiking to the restaurant — but draw the line at no fun at the finishing line. That's the Duke of Edinburgh awards, surely, not A Holiday?

Water sports

We're talking kayaking, water-skiing, paddleboarding and so on. Hardcores are very interested, naturally, and love learning body-enhancing skills from ripped instructors. Slobs are not keen. They have, to give them their due, done all the above over the years and found them to be quite boring. Paddleboarding may be the dullest thing you've done in your life. Also we — sorry, Slobs — don't like sitting around on hot jetties waiting for men in polo shirts and reflective sunglasses to show us the ropes of a "sport" that's basically standing up on a board when we could be under a fan eating figs.

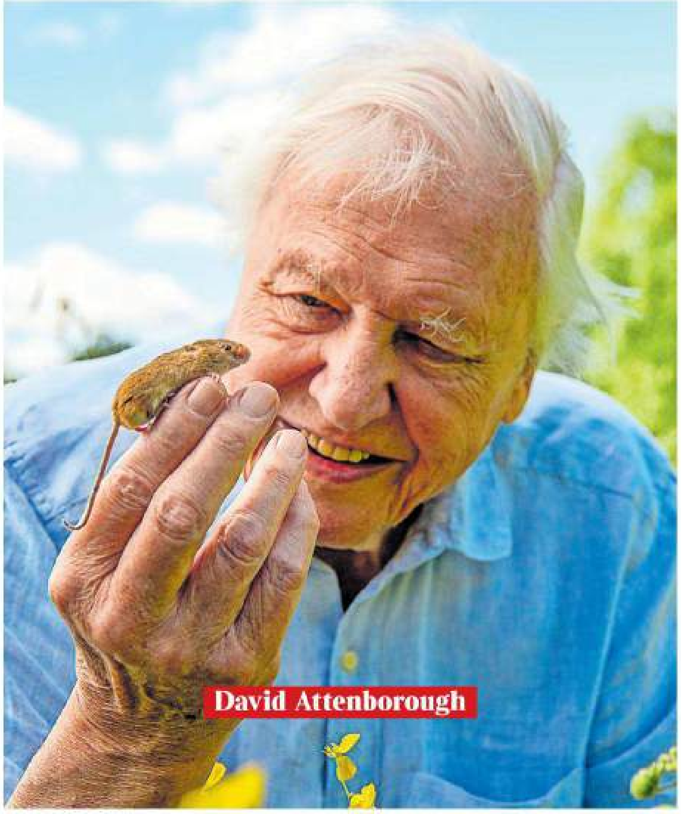
Sleep

Hardcores are sticking to more or less their regular bedtime, adjusted for the time zone, and getting up early to make the most of the day. Slobs are going with the flow, which generally means getting to bed when they can't find the corkscrew or there's a power cut, and they absolutely insist on a daily siesta. Getting-up times will vary.

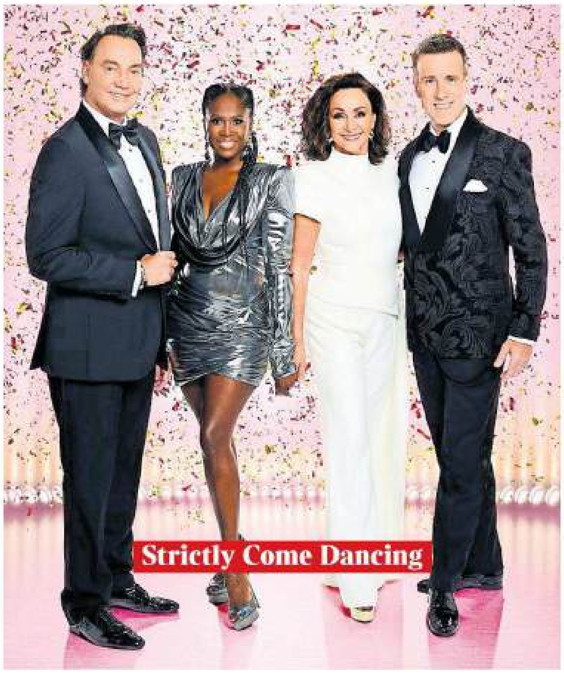
Fun

Possibly should have got to this one sooner as it is really the crux of the matter. Hardcores are looking for a physical and mental reboot — they may even use those terms without irony — and therefore the opportunity to swim 100 lengths before sun-up, to hike to lunch and then not have lunch, to use that spare minute to do a quick mat workout is their idea of fun. Slobs are looking for a different sort of fun. They want a rest and reboot but their R&R is more: horizontal, horizontal, swimming, wandering, looking at a church, shopping, shopping, snoozing, swimming, back in bed for a bit, twinkly cocktail party time. The big difference between the camps is the Slobs expect to come home happy and hoarse from laughing and late nights, and in need of a holiday. Apparently they wouldn't have it any other way.

BBC v Netflix —



David Attenborough



Strictly Come Dancing

A new report says that viewers are now as likely to turn to Netflix as the BBC, but which has the best drama, documentaries and comedy? By Ben Dowell

In 1982 the screenwriter Colin Welland stood before the great and good of Hollywood and declared, "The British are coming!" when the film *Chariots of Fire* won four Oscars. In 2026 that optimism has long run its course, at least in the world of TV entertainment. The Americans are not only coming — they are here, with the streamers dominating and US cash turbocharging broadcasters such as Channel 5 and Sky. And there is no bigger beast in the streaming market than Netflix.

According to figures from the media regulator Ofcom published this week, TV viewers are now as likely to turn to Netflix as the BBC. The Media Nations 2026 report shows that 26 per cent of viewers said they usually opened the streamer first when looking for something to watch last year, just ahead of the BBC's TV channels and iPlayer at 25 per cent.

While the rival services are virtually equal according to viewer preference, the downward trend is clear. In 2024 the BBC was the first option for 28 per cent of viewers, while 23 per cent made for Netflix. The previous year, Netflix was six points adrift of the BBC's 30 per cent.

It's yet another unwelcome headline that will cause anxiety for the BBC, which is cash-poor and locked in an existential battle with government over its funding (its director-general, Matt Brittin, told the parliamentary select committee this month that the licence fee is a "busted flush"). An estimated 94 per cent of the adult population may use BBC services but only 80 per cent of us pay the licence fee, and none of the options on the table — advertising, a subscription model, a direct tax from utility bills or council tax, or even money from a digital streamer tax — seems viable.

Meanwhile Netflix's funding is secured by its more than 325 million global subscribers and total content spend of about £15 billion a year, investing approximately £4.5 billion in UK production on shows such as *Bridgerton* and *Heartstopper* since 2020 and supporting an estimated 50,000 jobs in the country over the past ten years.

According to its annual report for 2025-26, the BBC spent £1.889 billion on "watched" content in the last financial year. "Browse" (ie mainly online content) accounted for £168 million.

A worldwide Netflix subscription costs a global average of £8.17 per month, with a UK subscription starting at £5.99 with adverts, going up to £18.99 for premium, which amounts to a £227.88 yearly cost — more than the £180 BBC licence fee. The BBC is funded primarily from the fee as well as proceeds from the activities of its commercial distribution arms and BBC Studios.

It helps that modern TVs and remote controls make Netflix easier to find and navigate. According to the Ofcom report, those aged 16 to 24 were more likely to choose Netflix first, with those aged 55 and over more likely to choose the BBC. However, older people are increasingly turning to streaming content. Viewers aged 55 to 74 watched an average of 85 hours of dramas such as Netflix's *Black Doves*, *Dept Q* and *House of Guinness*. This was up by 19 hours year-on-year, the greatest growth of any age group.

The BBC argues that its programme reach still dwarfs Netflix's. According to the Ofcom report, BBC content accounts for 18 per cent of all viewing, compared with 9 per cent for Netflix, which, the corporation says, "means audiences still spend around twice as much time watching the BBC".

> "Older viewers are turning to streaming content, more so than any other age group

So, as Harry Hill liked to ask on his peerless comedy *TV Burp*, which one is better? There is only one way to find out. Fiiiight! Or in our case, a sober head-to-head analysis of their best programmes genre by genre.

Drama

Netflix

Adolescence Jack Thorne and Stephen Graham's drama about the arrest of a 13-year-old boy for murder was filmed in immersive real-time single takes that were powerful, unsettling and gripping. But its appeal extended beyond the TV pages and prompted a national conversation — led by Keir Starmer as prime minister — about masculinity and the online manosphere.

The Crown Peter Morgan's bold, beautifully shot, multigenerational royal portrait that seamlessly bridged prestige historical drama and glossy high-budget soap. It survived multiple recasts that showcased the march of time, with Queen Elizabeth II moving from Claire Foy's reserve to Olivia Colman's weary pragmatism and Imelda Staunton's stoic matriarch.

Better Call Saul Vince Gilligan and Peter Gould's *Better Call Saul* accomplished the near-impossible: taking a prequel concept and crafting a masterpiece that some say surpasses its mother show, *Breaking Bad*. The origin story for Bob Odenkirk's sleazy strip-mall lawyer showed moral decay not as a sudden explosion but as a slow, heartbreaking erosion. This is a Netflix acquisition from the cable company AMC but is so good we couldn't leave it off.

BBC

Line of Duty Like most of the BBC shows in this list, this is filmed in the UK with British talent (unlike many of the Netflix ones). Few dramas today provide genuine water cooler moments, but Jed Mercurio's high-octane anti-corruption thriller turned police procedure into a national obsession. The beloved AC-12 trio of Ted Hastings, Steve Arnott and Kate Fleming made dense police acronyms and Regulation 15 notices feel like life-or-death drama. A new series looms.

Wolf Hall The director Peter Kosminsky and the screenwriter Peter Straughan's distillation of thousands of pages of Hilary Mantel's peerless prose into a spellbinding, masterly exploration of Tudor power, survival and political mechanics is one of the greatest dramas. While Damian Lewis's Henry VIII offered a volatile mixture of jovial warmth and terrifying menace, Mark Rylance's Thomas Cromwell commands every scene: a masterclass in emotional intelligence.

Blue Lights In a crowded landscape of weary police procedurals, Declan Lawn and Adam Patterson's Belfast drama eschews slick formulas for raw, grounded humanity. Following probationary officers navigating complex post-Troubles territory, the writing delivers breathtaking tension alongside dry Northern Irish humour in a show that triumphantly prioritises character above spectacle.

Who wins? **Netflix is getting better and better and wins this one — just.**

Entertainment

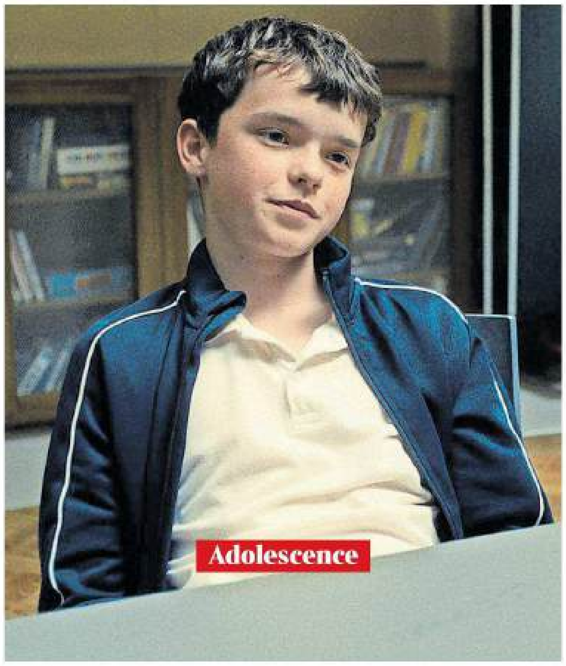
Netflix

Squid Game: The Challenge This felt like a cynical spin-off from the original drama, but was supremely, compulsively addictive. What makes it so absurdly effective is how faithfully

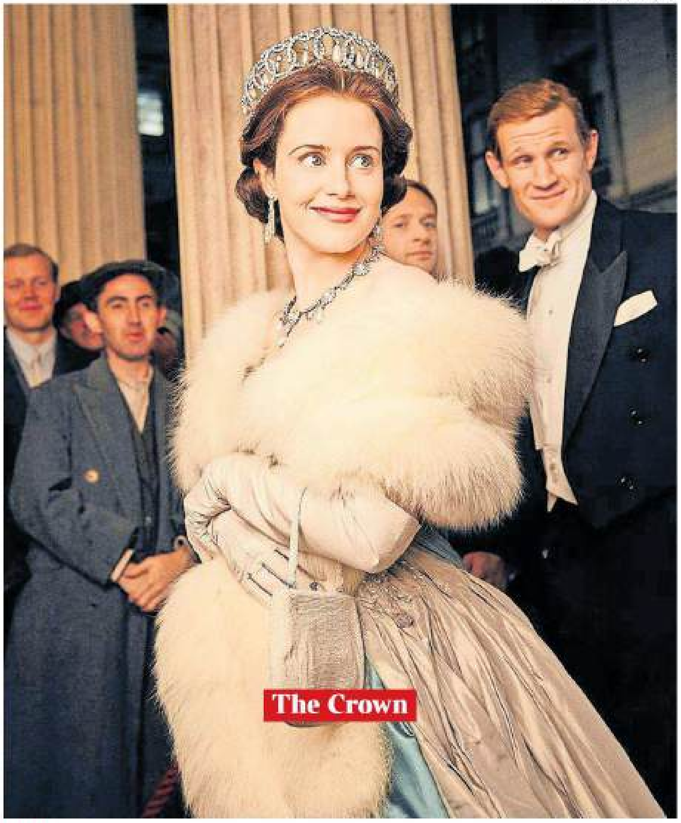
who does it best?

COVER AND BELOW: NETFLIX; BBC

Blue Lights



Adolescence



The Crown

it recreates the original's uncanny aesthetic, right down to the eerie doll and towering bunk beds, while replacing deadly stakes with pure psychological warfare as 456 real people turn on each other for a life-changing payout.

Love Is Blind Completely dreadful on paper, this absurdly high-concept dating experiment, where 30 desperate singles talk through walls, get engaged sight unseen and then test their fragile romances in the harsh light of reality, is an irresistible slice of trashy television that offers, at times, an intriguing study of human vulnerability.

Queer Eye This heart-warming lifestyle makeover programme has all the glossy American sentimentality, but there is an undeniable, slick charm to Netflix's update of the 2000s staple. Where the original version was rooted in cheeky, transactional makeover tricks, this update leant into social healing, tackling big-ticket issues of identity, class and political divides.

BBC

Strictly Come Dancing The BBC's sequin-strewn behemoth continues to defy the years and many scandals to remain a jewel in the corporation's crown. It manages to combine old-school light entertainment with a high-stakes competitive narrative, packaging human vulnerability within a glittering Saturday-night spectacle.

The Traitors This psychological reality juggernaut has established itself as the king of modern water cooler broadcasting. Set in an atmospheric Scottish castle and overseen by a cloaked Claudia Winkleman, it elevates the classic parlour game of murder-mystery to a high-stakes drama. The celebrity version was even better.

Race Across the World This wholesome exercise in human resilience and relationship dynamics, as pairings strive to reach a destination on a budget, allows viewers to observe real travel stresses with a feeling of contented detachment. As gently revealing as it is sweet, it proves that reality TV doesn't need manufactured conflict to be absorbing.

> “Louis Theroux is the latest face to fall for streamer money

Who wins? **The BBC, by a sequin.**

Documentaries

Netflix

Louis Theroux: Inside the Manosphere Theroux's peek into the testosterone-laden echo chambers of the manosphere was a forensic examination of whether outrage-driven ultra-masculine content served audiences or the creators' pockets. It was also a blow to the BBC because he became the latest face to fall for streamer money. Paradoxically Theroux recently popped up in the BBC's licence fee promo alongside Romesh Ranganathan, telling us that the corporation will go if we don't want it.

Making a Murderer Laura Ricciardi and Moira Demos's series effectively launched the modern streaming true crime boom. Filmed with painstaking detail across a decade, the Netflix docuseries follows Steven Avery — a Wisconsin man exonerated by DNA evidence after 18 years in prison, only to be charged with murder shortly after suing local law enforcement. Unfolding like a slow-burn legal thriller, it turned viewers into obsessive armchair detectives.

Tiger King The word-of-mouth lockdown hit was a fast-paced, jaw-dropping account of eccentric big cat breeding, murder-for-hire and American gothic subculture. And in Joe Exotic — a gun-toting, mullet-sporting roadside zoo owner — it offered one of TV's most unforgettable characters.

BBC

Once Upon a Time... Following his acclaimed *Once Upon a Time in Iraq* (2020) — and preceding his masterly *Once Upon a Time in Space* (2025) and *Once Upon a Time in the Middle East* (forthcoming) — the director James Bluemel's five-part landmark BBC series about Northern Ireland is a towering achievement in oral history that captures the everyday horror, moral compromise and enduring grief of a 30-year conflict with harrowing intimacy.

Planet Earth II Ten years after the original transformed natural history broadcasting, David Attenborough's six-part landmark returned to deliver a masterclass in cinematic spectacle. Armed with ultra-high-definition cameras, drone technology and Hans Zimmer's sweeping score, the series bridged the gap between traditional wildlife documentary and Hollywood blockbuster. The young iguanas fleeing racer snakes scene was also unforgettable.

The Power of Nightmares In Adam Curtis's three-part BBC masterpiece he audaciously argues that American neoconservatives and radical Islamists shared a parallel mindset: both utilising phantom threats to restore political authority through fear. A dazzling, prescient series.

Who wins? **A draw — the BBC has the range; Netflix has the heart-stopping moments.**

Comedy

Netflix

The Four Seasons Tina Fey's reimagining of Alan Alda's 1981 classic comedy is a triumph of grown-up, middle-class observational television, aided by a superb ensemble anchored by Fey and Steve Carell.

Alley Cats Ricky Gervais is about to do it again in the forthcoming animated comedy about a group of street cats mooching around. One of them looks (and rather acts) a bit like Gervais, a man whose collaborations with Netflix (the comedy drama *After Life*, his stand-up specials) continue to go great guns. Airs next week.

BoJack Horseman Another animated satire following a washed-up Nineties sitcom actor (who here happens to be a humanoid horse) navigating addiction, depression and Hollywood vanity, Raphael Bob-Waksberg's comedy remains one of TV's most emotionally daring achievements.

BBC

Am I Being Unreasonable? Ostensibly a spiky suburban comedy about maternal loneliness, this morphed into a deliciously dark, beautifully plotted thriller. Daisy May Cooper excels as Nic, a mother suffocating under quiet grief and secrets. Anchored by a star-making performance from Lenny Rush, the show balances sharp, chaotic humour with genuine psychological dread.

Such Brave Girls Kat Sadler's comedy centres on a dysfunctional family of self-obsessed, deeply traumatised women, and Sadler puts the monstrousness of mental illness directly before us and allows us to laugh at it. A fearless, essential new voice in British TV.

Detectorists This touching portrait of male friendship follows the metal-detecting enthusiasts Andy (Mackenzie Crook) and Lance (Toby Jones) as they scan the fields for gold. Steeped in a rare warmth and kindness, their search for buried treasure serves as a poignant metaphor for life's deeper quests: for connection, purpose and love. Beautifully crafted and funny.

Who wins? **BBC humour wins out.**

THE CRITICS

Straight outta Luton — a 21st-century answer to Kes

A boy has brushes with petty crime and sinister cops in this provocative, thoughtful drama, says Kevin Maher

The moving, sweetly played coming-of-age drama follows suburban preteen Ish (Farhan Hasnat, right)

It's become an established arthouse convention that serious contemporary cinema is shot in squarish frames — "academy ratio" (1.37:1) — and ideally in inky black and whites. Think *Cold War*, *Passing*, *Ida*, *The Tragedy of Macbeth* and *Nouvelle Vague*. It's an elegant gesture of defiance against today's increasingly chaotic screen culture, telegraphing to the front-row cognoscenti that this is a film of thoughtful ideas, provocative content and carefully considered aesthetics.

So it is with this moving and sweetly played coming-of-age drama, set in contemporary Luton but borrowing from classic genre staples such as *The 400 Blows*, *Kes* and *This Is England*. The protagonist is a doe-eyed suburban preteen called Ish, or Ishmail (Farhan Hasnat), who is grieving over the loss of his mother from cancer as he spends a summer of innocence in the nearby woods with best friend Maram (Yahya Kitana), practising fake punches and fantasising about bike stunts. In the first of many sublime touches from the London artist turned debut director Imran Perretta, the boys enter the woods via a modest-sized hole in a boarded-up fence. It screams CS Lewis.

Ish, however, is soon pulled in two dark directions. He is offered the giddy seduction of petty criminality with Maram's older hooligan buddies and haunted by an unmarked police van that cruises through the Luton housing estates like the shark in *Jaws*. Eerily we never see the police officers inside, just their facial recognition screens, framing the oblivious residents and foreshadowing a "snatch-and-grab" that becomes the film's defining moment.

The script — by Peretta and the screenwriter and playwright Enda Walsh (*Die My Love*, *Small Things Like These*) — layers the drama with a range of ideas about the forging of racial identity in modern Britain. Yet they return, via incessant radio broadcasts and news footage, to the notion that the war in Gaza is a virus that infects the lives and minds of those far from the bombing zones. An angry and deluded Maram warns Ish that "the IDF man is coming to town" (yes — to Luton!) and so, naturally, "war is coming to town".

In the end, though, this is a sensitive film about the nurturing power of family, the nourishing value of tradition and the toxicity of violence. It's quite the debut.

In cinemas

Ish

15, 87min

★★★★☆

the classic film

The Messenger (1999)

18, 158min

★★★★☆

The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc. That "story" is doing a lot of heavy lifting for a Luc Besson epic that deviates wildly from historical record, mostly in how it recasts Joan (Milla Jovovich) as an avenger who is driven forward by an all-consuming hatred for the English. "I just want the English to burn in hell, for ever and ever!" screams the eight-year-old Joan (Jane Valentine) after a grisly opening sequence that features the slaughter of her family (not true) and the assault, murder and rape (in that order, and also not true) of her beloved sister Catherine (Joanne Greenwood), all at the hands of the forces of Henry VI.

The subsequent film, however, newly restored in glistening 4K, has aged well. It looks astounding, the costumes are lush, the visual references painterly. Meanwhile Besson's obsession with Joan's seemingly fragile interior state has acquired a new and contemporary poignancy in the present era of the "mental health journey".

Yet as the film progresses Joan begins to question her faith in conversational set pieces with the literal embodiment of conscience, drolly played by Dustin Hoffman. The conscience could also be God or Jesus or Satan. The deliberately opaque script never makes this clear. The film's greatest strength is that it leaves the viewer in a state of comfortable agitation, not knowing whether Joan was a charlatan or a saint, a visionary or a madwoman.

In 4K UHD from Mon; on streaming (non 4K) now

Milla Jovovich as Joan of Arc

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ALAMY

It's Tom Holland to the rescue

the big film

The latest Spider-Man movie justifies the hype thanks to Holland's chemistry with his wife, Zendaya, says Kevin Maher

Spider-Man: Brand New Day
12A, 145min
★★★☆☆

Someone give Tom Holland a holiday. Not only did he provide Christopher Nolan's macho summer behemoth *The Odyssey* with a beating heart of male fragility as Telemachus, but the 30-year-old Londoner has now been charged with rescuing the ailing superhero genre.

As this latest and, gasp, 38th instalment in the Marvel Cinematic Universe opens, the Marvel montage that was once adorned with your favourite spandex-clad bruisers from the Avengers cycle has been replaced with portraits and snippets from Holland's hugely successful appearances as Spider-Man. After a series of costly Marvel misfires (*Thunderbolts, Captain America: Brave New World*, *The Marvels*) and an obscenely expensive Avengers double bill on the way (rumoured budget: $1 billion), the message is clear: Marvel is now the house that Tom built.

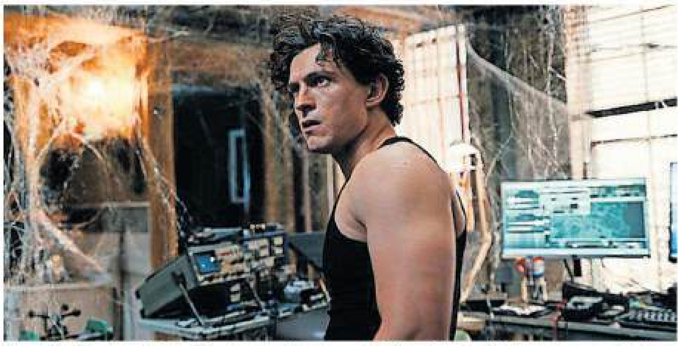
And for most of this latest spectacular Holland continues to justify the hype. His Peter Parker is sensitive, lost and broken, still reeling from the climax of 2021's *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, in which his best buddy Ned (Jacob Batalon) and high-school sweetheart MJ (Zendaya) were cruelly memory-wiped out of his life.

The gripping and unexpectedly moving melodrama at this film's core explores the tension between Peter and MJ. She senses hints of their hidden past, he craves a return of forgotten intimacy and both are somehow aware that a once-perfect love is for ever out of reach.

The director, Destin Daniel Cretton, deftly channels the chemistry of real-life newlyweds Holland and Zendaya (aka Zendaya Maree Stoermer Coleman). They inject extraordinary levels of ache and longing into charged conversational scenes that nudge the film into the realm of "impossible love" classics such as *Brief Encounter* and *Past Lives*. An especially devious scene, featuring a heartbreaking confession with an ulterior motive, is the highlight and the most sophisticated interpersonal moment to appear in a Marvel film.

Cretton, as he proved in his previous superhero outing *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*, is a canny stylist and finds expressive ways of visualising Peter's heartbreak. In one startling moment during a midnight New York downpour, the sodden webslinger, dressed in civvies, swings sadly across the rain-lashed skyline and, in teary close-up, releases his webbing and goes into what seems to be a terrifying suicide plunge.

The rest of the movie? It is, sadly, MCU by rote. There's a new deadly doomsday weapon in town. It's called the V-Max. Everyone wants it. Parker teams up, variously, with Jon Bernthal's Punisher and Mark Ruffalo's Hulk to get it. Standing in his way? A new telekinetic baddie and Parker suffering from a vague mutation that gives him black eyes, headaches and eruptions of excess spider-goo. The badly disguised Glasgow locations aren't fooling anyone — no amount of CGI skyscrapers can transform Trongate into Manhattan.



Tom Holland as Peter Parker and, top, as Spider-Man with Zendaya as MJ

There's a mildly engaging chase with a tank, some punch-ups with faceless henchmen and a saccharine finale that reveals the film's message: "The people who love you love you because you are you." And they say superhero movies are for simpletons.
In cinemas

American Utopia

12A, 106min
★★★☆☆

A little dose of David Byrne, unless you're a devoted Talking Heads fan, can go a long way. His art school mannerisms always, even in his heyday, felt a tad tired. This concert film directed by Spike Lee, however, is a revelation. It was when it was first dribbled out on to streaming in 2020 for a global populace then too traumatised by Covid to get especially excited by a 68-year-old gentleman in a grey suit warbling away. But Lee has given it a ravishing 4K resolution do-over and is presenting it in cinemas — a project ready for its well-deserved big screen close-up.

It's a live recording, filmed in Broadway's Hudson Theatre in 2019, of the Scottish-born singer-songwriter and 11 musicians stomping delightfully through 20 tracks from his oeuvre and a single Janelle Monáe cover (*Hell You Talmbout*). In between ditties Byrne treats us to sprightly ruminations on everything from dadaism to TV to the possibilities still promised by American democracy. Byrne dispels any creeping notions that he might be nurturing celebrity egotism or even a well-deserved sense of achievement. In the speech that follows a moving rendition of Monáe's protest song he confesses that what he likes most about the song is that it is "about the possibility of change, not just in the imperfect world out there but in myself too. I also need to change."

David Byrne

Lee injects the material with a vibrant, zippy pacing that accentuates the upbeat nature of so many chosen tunes. Dance routines are big here too, courtesy of the choreographer Anne-B Parson, while the inveterate cinephile in Lee hands over his 11 swooping, spinning cameras to the ace cinematographers Declan Quinn and Ellen Kuras.

How much better is the 4K spruce-up? I've seen both versions and can say, well, not a lot, other than that the red stage lights that occasionally interrupt the omnipresent greys are now a vivid, almost violent, crimson. But this was never really about the look, and in that we have to take the lead from Byrne, who notes that the concept for the show's sparse production design was to "eliminate everything from the stage except the stuff we care about the most — us and you — and that's what the show is".

And the downside? It flags horribly near the end, when Byrne insists on banging through three middling numbers from his 2018 album *American Utopia*. But he is also smart enough to end on a winner with a gorgeous, life-affirming rendition of *Road to Nowhere* that unfolds as a crazy conga line through the aisles and around the oscillating stalls of one very lucky and raucous theatre.
In cinemas from Wed

An album full of Grande emotion

The star addresses a recent break-up on her ethereal eighth record, says Will Hodgkinson

MARY KOUW/CBS VIA GETTY IMAGES

There is a distinctly aquatic quality to Ariana Grande's returning album. Synthesizers bubble along, Disney movie strings glide in a manner reminiscent of an underwater kingdom and Grande's disembodied soprano floats on it all with ethereal grace. "Some day all the seas will harbour all the love that's been denied us," she sings on *Freak*, an Eighties-tinged pop-rock standout. And you have to ask: is Grande having a subtle dig at her former boyfriend?

Until recently she was involved with Ethan Slater, a musical theatre star who in 2017 played the starring role in *SpongeBob SquarePants: The Broadway Musical* and played Boq Woodsman opposite her in *Wicked* the film. As every child of the Noughties, or a parent of one, knows, SpongeBob is a squeaky-voiced sea sponge who lives in the underwater city of Bikini Bottom. While there are no actual mentions of the friendly starfish or bad-tempered crabs that make up SpongeBob's world, the marine aspect of what is essentially a break-up album does seem a bit more than a coincidence.

Aquatic allusions or not, *Petal* serves to mark out Grande as a rare figure in contemporary pop: a big celebrity who thoroughly inhabits her own universe. Pop is trend-based and as such its biggest names are frequently less unique than they think — see Charli XCX catching the wave of a rock revival — but with its burbling synthesizer lines, chorused vocals and tropical moods, the album *Petal* most resembles is Grande's 2019 release *Thank U, Next*.

Part of this is down to her voice. She has an extremely impressive four-octave range with a whistle register, leading to those signature fantastic high notes. She has also rehired Ilya Salmanzadeh (Ed Sheeran) and Max Martin (Taylor Swift) as producers on an otherworldly, harmonious work that operates as a gentle way of dealing with love and heartbreak.

"Kiss me like you know this is goodbye," Grande gushes on *Kiss Me*, a laid-back slice of breezy, exotic pop. By *Petal*, with its heavily distorted bass tones under Grande's gossamer notes, she's dramatising her own misery. "All of my favourite stories end in catastrophe," sings the woman who, as Glinda the Good, had a hard time convincing her fellow witch Elphaba not to be evil in *Wicked*. "I won't be your fantasy this time," she announces over a bouncing guitar line on *Freak*.

It is all rather weightless and non-specific and, while maintaining a spirit of innocence, focuses on adult emotions. It is also extremely sophisticated, with a confidence that suggests she made the album without worrying too much about what may land well with a contemporary audience. "I don't care about a perfect ending. But that's all right," sings Grande, the epitome of American showbusiness professionalism, on *Nowhere, Nobody*, the tender final ballad. She has doubled down on her style on an album that's both dreamlike and old-fashioned — a triumph indeed for a land-dwelling superstar.

pop

Ariana Grande
Petal
Babydoll/Republic
★★★★☆

Macca gets his first Mercury nomination, aged 84

What, no Rolling Stones? This was, bizarrely, the summer of the Beatles and the Stones, with Paul McCartney representing the former with his best album in decades, and Jagger, Richards and the gang having something of a late career revival on *Foreign Tongues*. Only one made it onto the Mercury shortlist for album of the year, however. It suggests the heated rivalry between the two bands that defined the 1960s is not over yet.

I'm a judge on the Mercury prize but I can't begin to predict who will win this year because the result always surprises me. I'm pleased to see Florence Welch on the list: *Everybody Scream* is a visceral capturing of a near-death experience, rich in emotion and folkloric metaphor, and curiously it seemed to go under the radar. The biggest album in commercial terms has been Olivia Dean's *The Art of Loving*, a breezy, soulful, bossa nova-tinged hit that proved to be just what the frazzled nerves of the nation needed. Then there is Bradford's Nia Archives, who feels like a real Mercury story. Her first album, 2024's *Silence Is Loud*, was a joyful, drum'n'bass-driven tale of a developing romance. Now, on a second album, *Emotional Junglist*, it sounds like that romance has gone horribly wrong. Some industrial rock has been added to suit the mood.

Elsewhere, two relative unknowns are getting deserved wider exposure. Dove Ellis is a Galway singer-songwriter with a voice reminiscent of Jeff Buckley and his father, Tim. He is a precocious poetic talent: describing the past as "a sign you think you've lived but it's just stone with a little chalk" is quite remarkable at 22. Then there is Knats, a young jazz quintet led by the bassist Stan Woodward and the drummer King David-Ike Elechi, who have taken stories from their Newcastle community and applied them to music that recalls Charles Mingus and John Coltrane.

Amid all this youthful freshness, let's not forget Macca — at 84, he ties with Martin Carthy as the oldest artist to be nominated for the prize. *The Boys of Dungeon Lane* looks back to teenage crushes in the cold Mersey mornings, to hitchhiking out of Liverpool with George Harrison with dreams of glory. Arguably, those dreams were fulfilled several times over. What a remarkable turn of events that McCartney, *below*, can be honoured with a best album nomination more than 60 years later.

Will Hodgkinson

The shock and awe of such brilliant Beethoven

On the very day of the album's release, the historian Simon Schama wrote: "Have listened to Sonata No 30 now three times non-stop. It's — and her performance — so profound and humane." By now he's probably played the sonata many more times, quite apart from its two companions, completing the trio of late Beethoven piano sonatas wonderfully performed by **Mitsuko Uchida**.

Recorded in Tokyo, the performances display the virtues expected from such a sensitive and gracious musician who never once shows off but simply places her art at Beethoven's service. The demands in sonatas 30-32 are considerable, including severe emotional changes and other structural peculiarities from a composer testing the boundaries of what a piano sonata in the early 1820s could do.

Nothing that Uchida, *left*, does diminishes the shock and awe built into those jagged contrasts in mood and dynamics. At the same time, the transformations from limpid flow to granular force and vice versa are handled so deftly that the progressions feel utterly appropriate and exactly what Beethoven desired.

As for being "profound and humane", Schama's judgment is even more true of No 32, the two-movement epic whose gnarled beginnings finally dissolve into a variation finale on an unassuming theme of such poise and calm that we seem to have reached the musical equivalent of "the peace of God, which passes all understanding".

The piano literature doesn't only consist of the grand masters' masterpieces, there are also little jewels and frivolities. For example there are also the subjects of the *Piano Postcards* by **Stephen Hough** — 26 of them.

Beginning in Disneyland (Hough's own arrangements from *Mary Poppins*), he wanders into Spain, Rachmaninovland and France, and visits Edward MacDowell's *Wild Rose* and Sinding's *Rustle of Spring*, transforming what might sometimes appear faded encore pieces into glistening new delights by his elegance, wit, and love for the task and the music at hand.

Particular pleasures? I'd highlight the three pieces by Cécile Chaminade, works that only need affection and flexible fingers for their magic to live again. It does so here.

Geoff Brown

classical

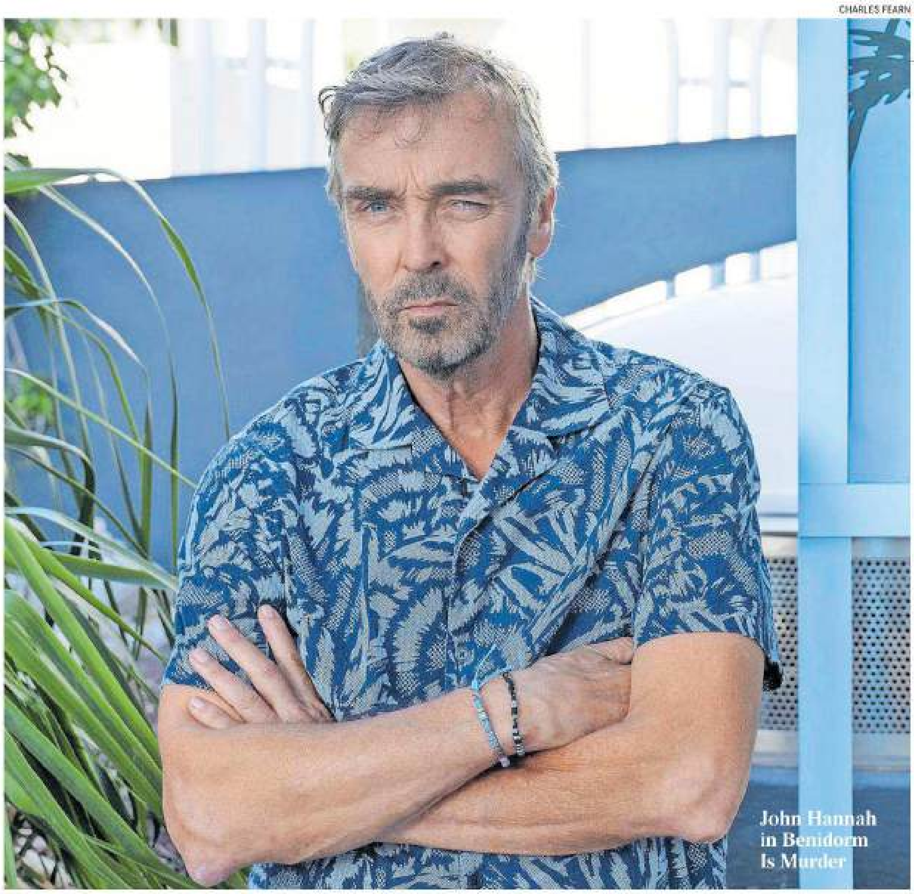
Mitsuko Uchida
Beethoven
Decca
★★★★★

Stephen Hough
Stephen Hough's Piano Postcards
Hyperion
★★★★☆

T

Jazz albums

A radical reboot of Miles Davis heads the best albums of the month at thetimes.com/culture



CHARLES FEARN

John Hannah in Benidorm Is Murder

Colour-blind casting has maybe gone a bit too far

John Hannah tells Ben Dowell about his new crime caper and the lack of working-class stories on TV

If you want an indication of how happy and relaxed the actor John Hannah is at the moment, the cackle he gives when telling me that one of his latest roles is playing a seal-like creature called the Fin Man in the forthcoming film *The Incomer* is as good as any. It's almost as if he's channelling the aquatic animal which, he tells me, is the reincarnated father of two eccentric siblings living on a remote Scottish island.

Not that the 64-year-old actor who achieved big-screen success in the films *Sliding Doors* and *Four Weddings and a Funeral* is going entirely leftfield. For the next four months he is filming his part as Rachel Weisz's wisecracking older brother in the fourth *Mummy* film alongside his friend Brendan Fraser. "I can still get around, the old knees are still working," he says — and good thing too given "how much Brendan throws me around".

This is a man with range, from the ruthless gladiator owner Quintus Batiatus in the Starz drama *Spartacus* to the weary detective John Rebus in the ITV adaptation of the Ian Rankin books, a role he left after just one series. I have always wondered why.

"I've never done more than two seasons of anything," he says. "And partly that's because once you realise what the formula is, it just becomes kind of dull. Even the Rebus books... which I loved, I love the books, I still do, but once you're reducing the whole novel down to a two-hour, three-hour television thing, there are the salient points that you have to put in. And then once you've done that two or three times... it's kind of the same story. As with any thriller, once you have that kind of charismatic problem-solver, and you've got something that works, by the very nature of it, it tends to become samey."

Hannah has taken it easy recently and didn't work for the first six months of this year, breaking off to voice the BBC entertainment series *Race Across the World*, a gig that "kind of keeps me going and keeps me in beer money". He has twins, aged 22 — son Gabriel, who has just graduated from Manchester, and daughter Astrid, who this summer graduated from Bournemouth in photography — so he says he still needs the cash ("I don't know where it f***ing goes").

In his latest drama, a cosy Channel 5 crime caper called *Benidorm Is Murder*, he plays Dennis Crown, a washed-up detective turned bar owner at the Spanish resort city who gets dragged into murder cases. It's scripted by the *Death in Paradise* writer Ian Jarvis but has a more down-at-heel feel that Hannah loves — the cutaways tend not to be exotic golden beaches but ordinary people downing pints.

He won't hear a word against Benidorm, which he knows his parents would have enjoyed. His father, John, was a toolmaker, and his mother, Susan, worked at Marks & Spencer. He says they'd have loved the sun and "to get their pints for two euros [and] full Scottish breakfasts".

He lives in Richmond, southwest London, with his wife, the actress Joanna Roth, and they are in the process of selling their Devon holiday home. He has clearly come a long way from his early days in East Kilbride. He first worked as an apprentice electrician before landing a place at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in the early 1980s. An aspiring footballer in his early years, he wore a Maradona shirt in 1986 after the "Hand of God" goal but supported England at this year's World Cup after Scotland's exit.

"I've lived in London for 40-odd years... I'm an Arsenal fan," he says. But he remains proud of his roots and what he calls the "blue-collar" ethos of *Benidorm Is Murder*. Would a working-class lad from East Kilbride stand a chance coming into acting today?

"No, not a chance. Not a chance. I was subsidised through many, many months of unemployment by housing benefit, unemployment benefit. That wouldn't happen now. And also, when I came out of college in the Eighties, it was on the crest of some great writing about the working class, *Boys from the Blackstuff*, all of that kind of thing."

In 1998 he formed the company Clerkenwell Films but, seemingly disillusioned, has since stepped away from independent production. "One of the things I got pissed off about with the production company was we would have meetings with the BBC and they would tell us what they were looking for, and then we'd find a writer to do a treatment and go back to them. Of course they'd like the treatment because it was what they were looking for and what they wanted, and then that would go into development. It made me feel like everything's the same. It's all coming from the same minds of the people who have been at the same universities and who want to see the same shit that they see. I definitely think there's a dearth of working-class stories."

Hannah, on right, with James Fleet, Robin McCaffrey, Kristin Scott Thomas, David Bower and Charlotte Coleman in Four Weddings and a Funeral

Have they been sidelined in favour of other forms of diversity? "I think so. It's certainly a good thing that they're addressing the race issues in terms of diversity — Armando Iannucci's *David Copperfield* was brilliant. Occasionally there's something that just sort of defies logic. I went to see *The Glass Menagerie* in the West End... I love the play, but with the colour-blind casting I just found it very difficult to get beyond what I was seeing by comparison to what I was hearing.

"It does feel like maybe it's gone a bit too far in terms of proportional representation, for want of a better expression. So perhaps it will even out again, or maybe it's just a fashion. I hope not for the sake of many, many good black actors, brown actors, yellow actors that are out there that haven't historically got a chance to see themselves... Maybe they think that an ethnic minority is by its nature working class anyway, which is a problem."

Hannah's big break came with his moving delivery of WH Auden's poem *Stop All the Clocks* in *Four Weddings and a Funeral* as the grieving Matthew. In the aftermath he had a tough time mentally and sought therapy "just to deal with how life had changed".

"I had met my wife and been with her for three or four years and I was glad of that... Listen, it's great, people know who you are, you can get a table at a restaurant. But it does make you... accessible. Suddenly I was really popular.

"Even in work situations and casting situations, I felt really angry that previously I remembered the National Theatre wouldn't change an audition time for me — I had a f***ing dentist appointment. And then just after *Four Weddings* I was offered a lead part in a musical, and I'm not musical. I was just really angry at how things had changed, how you were suddenly perceived differently. It pissed me off for a while and I thought, 'This is terrible, I'm having such a great time and yet I'm so f***ing angry.'

"I suppose I was also angry at just how shallow people are... At that point I wasn't comfortable enough or confident enough to kind of take those opportunities with any kind of grace and think, 'Well, that's the way the world is.' I was just kicking my heels up at it a little bit, I suppose.

"It just disturbed my mind and my sense of my place in the world and how the world was, and maybe even my sense of myself as being very working class. Maybe it was a chip on my shoulder. Being Scottish, they say we're very balanced, because we have a chip on each shoulder."

He has been on a "journey" and is now perfectly happy with "the level of fame that I have had and have now that still allows me to work", he says. When he turned 60 he told his family he was thinking of retiring. "It was kind of a joke but what I meant by it was I'm not chasing anything any more. I'm not having any ambition to get to the next level or do this job so that it can lead to another job.

"The last two years working in Spain and then a year before working in Rome, it seemed to me that they had a much better kind of quality of life-work balance. They'd work, but they also wanted to do something nice and chilled and eat nice food, go see friends and travel. I'd like to do that... I always say if there's an interesting fun job that's filming in an interesting fun place or it's well paid, I'll do it. But it has to be at least two of those three things."

Benidorm Is Murder **contines on 5 on Thu**

proms

BBC SSO/Wigglesworth

Royal Albert Hall, London
★★★☆☆

Was it the promise of a balmy summer night under a full moon that kept people away from this Prom or the prospect of an entirely contemporary first half? We didn't miss out on the night sky, anyway. Judith Weir conjured our very own in *Moon and Star*, a suitably spacious and spacey setting of Emily Dickinson's watchful poetry. It sounds much like Holst's Neptune deconstructed. Variously rich and mysterious harmonies misalign in a deranged, delightful cosmic dance between the sections of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the BBC Singers.

There was also something enjoyably unhinged about the premiere of *The World's Wife* by Brett Dean. Dean's pungent musical language was a good match for these five gently vengeful Carol Ann Duffy poems, which imagine a mocking Mrs Darwin, an embarrassed Mrs Icarus and a has-been Medusa, and were inhabited by the singular soprano-muse Claire Booth. The obsessive *Valentine*, about gifting a lover an onion, chugs and convulses with busy, bunny-boiler energy. But this blackly comic number, and indeed the song cycle as a whole, is oddly low on humour. The most successful moments were the least demonstrative, calling for more subtle vocal stylings from an occasionally pitchy but committed Booth.

There was much strife, although not quite enough magic in the colourful, troublesome first movement of Elgar's First Symphony. But the slow movement cast a palpable spell, and while the brass needed some taming, it's a testament to Ryan Wigglesworth's controlled direction that I was never in doubt as to what to listen for in Elgar's denser, more action-packed stretches. The assured, Brahmsian vigour of the uplifting finale spoke of the powerful partnership between these BBC musicians and their chief conductor before their final season together.

Daniel Lewis

On BBC Sounds; Elgar's First Symphony is on BBC4/iPlayer from today at 7pm

Claire Booth

CRAIG FULLER

Elin Pritchard makes Verdi look easy as Amelia, while Matteo Desole brings breezy charm to Gustavo

Having a ball with Verdi

Given a Forties update, Verdi's mid-period drama features a sensational soprano, says Neil Fisher

opera

Un ballo in maschera

Opera Holland Park, London (180min)
★★★★☆

Two operas with pivotal parties round off this summer's Holland Park season. Johann Strauss's operetta *Die Fledermaus*, where the quaffing of too much champagne sends everything topsy-turvy, comes last; stealing in front is Verdi's *A Masked Ball*, which finishes in bloodshed as good King Gustavus III of Sweden is assassinated by the man he thought was his best friend.

Yet the notable quality of Verdi's mid-period drama is how it teeters between laughter and darkness. "Is it a joke or is it madness?" asks Gustavo when his death is (accurately) prophesied by the mysterious seer Madame Arvidson — herself rather hard to take seriously, and in Rodula Gaitanou's production (first mounted in 2019) given a useful whiff of Noël Coward's Madame Arcati, the crackpot charlatan.

Most productions make the mistake of turning this happy king into a playboy prince, which makes it hard to think that his death is a great loss to anyone. Opting for a 1940s setting, Gaitanou finds enough ambiguity to keep us guessing. The 2019 staging predates the post-Covid installation of Holland Park's thrust "apron" stage and too little occurs front-stage, but the eerie denouement — a masked ball populated by costumed figures resembling Queen Victoria, Cleopatra and other ghostly monarchs — hits home perfectly.

Singing with lyrical polish and breezy charm, Matteo Desole's Gustavo ignores the signs of political turmoil and conspiracy, focusing on his *Brief Encounter*-style romance with Elin Pritchard's Amelia. Their Act II fumble is not exactly theatrical dynamite — Pritchard briskly unbuttons Desole's waistcoat as if she's doing a pat-down at Stamford Bridge — but when they both back away guiltily from consummating their affair, the moment feels authentic, especially when Verdi's most intense music of the night is brought to the boil so well by the conductor Michael Papadopoulos.

He undoubtedly has the measure of Verdi, drawing powerful playing from the City of London Sinfonia, and the cast is notably strong. Rhian Lois's Oscar, the page who annoys nearly everyone, sings too well to annoy me, and the veteran Rosalind Plowright still attacks the sepulchral low notes of Arvidson with gusto. Dario Solari's cuckolded Anckarstrom seemed to be ailing, but in some respects that enhanced the character's angst. Best of all is Pritchard's sensational singing: she makes Verdi's long lines and floated high notes look easy. Bigger houses surely beckon.

To Aug 7

proms

LPO/Gardner

Royal Albert Hall, London
★★★★☆

Are we humans part of nature or separate from it? Though this Prom with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and its principal conductor Edward Gardner offered three wildly different works, the question was there in all of them, and the answer was ultimately the same: an admission of human frailty set against the vastness of everything else.

I have not heard an orchestral work that "begins with a squirrel eating", which is Kristine Tjogersen's useful description of the scratchy introduction to *Between Trees* (no squirrels included, it's all in the weird instrumental effects). As we become tangled in the Norwegian composer's "fungal threads" (again, her words) the piece twitches into life, alien but absorbing. The outbreak of lyrical, recognisably humane emotion — an oboe solo beautifully played by Ian Hardwick — is almost a wrench.

Voice sits wistfully alongside a teeming depiction of a vanishing world — an Occitan *France profonde* — in Canteloube's *Songs of the Auvergne*. In this selection from the collection Louise Alder was a superbly evocative soloist and in the climactic *Baïlèro* her voice almost dissolved into textures beautifully painted by the orchestra.

> **“This is an orchestral work that begins with ‘a squirrel eating’**

Strauss asks us to conquer a mountain in the *Alpine Symphony* — but even after we manage it, his long, melancholic postlude is notably un-triumphant. The piece is usually a blinder in the Albert Hall — particularly when a whole extra brass band bursts in from the gallery — yet while there was plenty of visceral excitement (Gardner favoured a fast ascent), it was the inner voices that resonated. Best of all was, once again, Hardwick's oboe solo — a view from the summit that was half-awe, half-ache.

Neil Fisher

On BBC Sounds

theatre

Love's Labour's Lost

Shakespeare's Globe, London (155min)
★☆☆☆☆

Love's Labour's Lost is Shakespeare's rom-com about the intellect. Four pretentious young men, led by a dweeby king, lock themselves away for three years of study, forswearing the distracting company of women.

Who should arrive at the palace gates but four whip-smart maidens, with less book learning but more nous, led by a conveniently eligible princess? Cue disguises on the dancefloor, misdelivered letters and a famous pastiche of a Tudor Latin lesson.

This is challenging material, which is why the Globe swaps in an Andalusian fiesta, the plot taking second place to a series of dance-offs between the sexes.

It may have seemed like a brainwave when the director Indiana Lown-Collins pitched it. *Love's Labour's Lost* is set in the Franco-Spanish border kingdom of Navarre, and it's no stretch for the female delegation to feature a Princess of Spain who can do flamenco stomping, rather than Shakespeare's Princess of France. The result, however, is a crude cacophony of impenetrable Spanish accents, punctuated by groin thrusts and clumsy pratfalls, with nothing to say about love, learning or loss.

Pablo Egea and Anita La Maltesa

The dances, in so far as they feature, occasionally impress. A hunting scene is swapped for a bull-fighting sequence, allowing the Anglo-Spanish actress Norah Lopez Holden to show off her flamenco experience. Jimena Larraguivel, as country wench Jacquenetta, expresses a few moments of yearning through no more than perfect wrist placement. But these are scant compensation for an evening of cheap laughs and lazy stereotypes played for the least discerning of the tourist crowd.

Lown-Collins rewrites Shakespeare's Latin puns as Spanglish miscommunications, which would be a reasonable accommodation if they rose above the linguistic register of a nine-year-old boy. The scene in which the male lovers cover their bulbous faux phalli with gold Lycra is a lowlight.

It's a terrible waste. Lopez Holden elevates anything she's in, as does Philip Arditti's Berowne, the king's wittiest companion. But Shakespeare's wordiest play has become a crass dumbshow.

Kate Maltby

To Sep 13

Harriet Walter's mother: the secret heroine

Ben Dowell
TV review

Who Do You Think You Are?
BBC1
★★★☆☆

Those familiar faces of wholesome celebrities, those turns to the camera, that well-known piano music, those walks past the camera, the faraway sunlit stares. It's little wonder that Diane Morgan's slovenly sitcom character Mandy ruthlessly parodied the tropes of *Who Do You Think You Are?*, now on series 23. Morgan called her take-off "Who are you, do you think?"

Still, it's a rock solid format that can take a joke, though it can be hit and miss. Some of the dynastic revelations over the years — such as the time we found out that a relative of Ian McKellen invented the weekend — make the news pages. Other times watching it can feel as if you are trapped on your in-laws' sofa wading through a family photo album (Mishal Husain, I am talking to you).

But as it doggedly treads ever more familiar journeys into celeb family trees, it's clear that each instalment presents a creative challenge. Do we want more of the same or the same done just a bit differently? Television is, after all, a medium hungry for innovations and twists.

I suspect the jolly actress Harriet Walter went for a slightly different tack for personal reasons. The Walter of her surname relates to the clan that founded the greatest newspaper in the world (the one you are reading). But she wasn't interested in them, a branch of the family tree that she painted as rather stiff and old-fashioned. It was the women she was fascinated by. And quite rightly.

Her mother, Xandra, was an enchanting-looking woman with a fascinating life who had, we learnt, been patronised by her husband, Harriet's father. "Your mother's not very logical," Walter was told and the even more heartbreaking detail was that she collaborated in it. "I don't matter, darling," Xandra would say.

But her daughter knew Xandra worked in Admiralty intelligence during the war, although since Xandra was a decent sort who kept secrets, Harriet never knew what she did. Astonishingly, this belittled woman was privy to top-secret details of the Normandy landings and played no small part in the operation's execution.

And the face that stared at us looked very much like her actress daughter, now swishing around in expensive-looking linen and sporting a pair of striking red glasses. She felt fabulously brought to life. Actors are good at doing that sort of thing.

Further back in the maternal line, Walter heard about her Italian family, the Carandinis, and a chap called Girolamo, who attended a school for nobles in the early 19th century but was something of a rogue.

In a manner she clearly couldn't extend to her dad and the rest of the Walter males, she was intensely forgiving of his many scrapes, which included getting into debt, being fired from the army and then heading to Tasmania, or Van Diemen's Land as it was known, a place where a face was a canvas for fabulous whiskers.

He travelled through Australia with his wife, Maria, and they brought opera to the masses, though Girolamo was still failing to avoid trouble, his wife supporting him to the end. "Boys will be boys and girls will be women," we were told. In the case of the Walter Carandini family, it's definitely the women who dazzle.

One of the actress's ancestors founded The Times newspaper

Radio choice

The Rest Is Politics
Podcast

As we have been experiencing a heatwave, now is an excellent time for this new investigative series from *The Rest Is Politics*, entitled *When Nature Becomes a Security Threat*. Presented by the former Green Party leader and MP Caroline Lucas, *above*, it is based on a government report from the Joint Intelligence Committee that concluded that ecosystem collapse must be treated as a core national security threat, leading to empty supermarket shelves, water scarcity and an increased risk of conflict. The series will also look at the impact of AI data centres on our water supplies.
Clair Woodward

Times Radio
Digital, web, smart speaker, app
5.00am Tom Nunan with Early Breakfast **6.00** Rosie Wright and Calum Macdonald with Times Radio Breakfast **10.00** Ryan Tubridy **1.00pm** Ayesha Hazarika **4.00** Sebastian Payne with Times Radio Drive **7.00** Geoff Norcott **10.00** Henry Bonsu **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

Radio 2
FM: 88-90.2 MHz
6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** DJ Spoony **4.00** Angela Scanlon **7.00** Michelle Visage **8.30** Michelle Visage's Handbag Hits **9.00** Sophie Ellis-Bextor's Kitchen Disco **11.00** The Rock Show with Shaun Keaveny **12.00** Romesh Ranganathan: For the Love of Hip-Hop (r) **1.00am** Tony Blackburn's Sounds of Soul **2.00** Pick of the Pops (r) **4.00** Radio 2 in Concert: The Killers (r)

Radio 3
FM: 90.2-92.4 MHz
6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics
1.00pm Classical Live
Including highlights from the BBC Proms and the Aldeburgh Festival. Elgar (Symphony No. 1 in A flat); Dvorak (Piano Trio No. 4 in E minor, Op. 90 – *Dumky*); Judith Bingham (*Moon and Stars*); Coward (*If Love Were All* from *Bittersweet*); Lehrer (*The Masochism Tango*); Sondheim (*The Girls of Summer* and *Love Is in the Air* from *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*); Schubert (*An die Musik* D547); and Walton (Cello Concerto)
4.00 Composer of the Week: Alice Mary Smith (1839-1884)
Donald Macleod explores Smith's final years and her last orchestral works with guests Ian Graham-Jones and Leanne Langley
5.00 In Tune
7.00 Classical Mixtape
7.30 Live BBC Proms
Georgia Mann presents as Omer Meir Wellber conducts the Bremen orchestra in concert, with a guest appearance by Swedish violinist Daniel Lozakovich, live at the Royal Albert Hall. Haydn (Symphony No. 44 in E minor – *Trauer*); Bruch (Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor); and Robert Schumann (Symphony No. 4 in D minor –rev. version, 1851). At the interval, Jessica Duchen looks at the artistic profile of the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen as it approaches its fourth decade. She also compares Schumann's two versions of his Fourth Symphony.
10.00 Late Junction
Jennifer Lucy Allan shares a kaleidoscopic mixtape crafted by cult musician Makoto Kubota
11.30 'Round Midnight
Soweto Kinch sits down with multi-instrumentalist Jon Batiste
12.30am Through the Night (r)

Radio 4
FM: 92.4-94.6 MHz
5.00am News Summary
5.04 The Briefing Room (5) (r)
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today
9.00 Desert Island Discs (r)
10.00 Woman's Hour
11.00 The Food Programme
11.45 Confessions of a Performative Male
By Darren McGarvey (5/5)
12.04pm AntiSocial (5/6)
1.00 The World at One
1.45 Dead Rabbit
A verdict is announced (10/10)
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama: Central Intelligence
A coup erupts in the Dominican Republic. Stars Kim Cattrall (4/10)
2.45 Living on the Edge (5/10) (r)
3.00 Gardeners' Question Time
3.45 Short Works
4.00 Last Word
4.30 Sideways (3/8) (r)
5.00 PM
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Current-ish
Lucy Porter is joined by Finlay Christie, Amy Annette and Christopher Macarthur-Boyd (2/3)
7.00 The Archers
Harrison does not know where to turn. Neil tries to keep the peace
7.15 Screenshot
Examining film and television's enduring fascination with UFOs and extraterrestrial life (5/6)
8.00 Any Questions?
Chaired by Alex Forsyth
8.55 This Week in History (r)
9.00 Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics (1/7) (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Wild Dark Shore (10/10)
11.00 Americast
11.30 A Good Read (6) (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Confessions of a Performative Male (5/5) (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Radio 4 Extra
Digital only
8.00am The Confessional **8.30** Sounds Like London: 100 Years of Black Music in the Capital **8.45** Small Island **9.00** Parish Matters **9.30** The Time of My Life **9.45** Daily Service **10.00** Soul Music **10.30** Art of Now: The Gospel of Grime **11.00** Raffles **11.30** Charles Paris: A Deadly Habit **12.00** Little Blighty on the Down **12.30pm** Beyond Our Ken **1.00** The Confessional **1.30** Sounds Like London: 100 Years of Black Music in the Capital **1.45** Small Island **2.00** The Museum of Curiosity **2.30** Millport **3.00** The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency **3.45** The Phoenix and the Carpet **4.00** Soul Music **4.30** Art of Now: The Gospel of Grime **5.00** Raffles **5.30** Charles Paris: A Deadly Habit **6.00** Little Blighty on the Down **6.30** Beyond Our Ken **7.00** The Confessional **7.30** Sounds Like London: 100 Years of Black Music in the Capital **7.45** Small Island **8.00** The Museum of Curiosity **8.30** Millport **9.00** The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency **9.45** The Phoenix and the Carpet **10.00** Parish Matters **10.30** Njambi McGrath: Becoming Njambi **10.45** Rhys James Is Irresistible **11.00** Vent **11.30** Laura Solon: Talking and Not Talking

Radio 5 Live
MW: 693, 909
5.00am Wake Up to Money **6.00** 5 Live Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **11.00** Chiles on Friday **1.00pm** Elis James and John Robins **2.00** Matt Chorley **4.00** 5 Live Drive **7.00** Glasgow 2026. Eighth day of the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow **10.00** Stephen Nolan **1.00am** Laura McGhie

talkSPORT
MW: 1053, 1089 kHz
5.00am Early Sports Breakfast **6.00** Breakfast with Alan Brazil **10.00** Sam Matterface & Alex Crook **1.00pm** Hawksbee and Jacobs **4.00** talkSPORT Drive **7.00** Thank Football It's Friday **10.00** The Sports Bar Weekender **1.00am** Extra Time with Ben Fletcher

Talk
Digital only
6.00am Mark Dolan **10.00** Alex Phillips **1.00pm** Ian Collins **4.00** Kevin O'Sullivan **7.00** Peter Cardwell **9.00** What Just Happened? with Kevin O'Sullivan **10.00** Andre Walker ft. Ash **1.00am** Ben Fletcher

6 Music
Digital only
5.00am The Remix with Chris Hawkins **5.30** Amy Lamé **7.00** Nick Grimshaw **10.00** Jamz Supernova **1.00pm** Deb Grant **4.00** Huw Stephens **7.00** The People's Party with Femi Koleoso **9.00** Indie Forever **11.00** The 6 Mix with Mary Anne Hobbs **12.00** Rave Forever **1.00am** Forever Dark **2.00** Focus Beats **4.00** Ambient Focus

Virgin Radio
Digital only
6.30am Steve Denyer on The Chris Evans Breakfast Show **10.00** Ana Matronic **2.00pm** Ben Jones **6.00** Stu Elmore **10.00** Goldierocks **2.00am** Jen Thomas

Classic FM
FM: 100-102 MHz
6.30am Classic FM Breakfast with Dan Walker **9.00** The Hall of Fame Hour **10.00** Aled Jones **1.00pm** Anne-Marie Minhall **4.00** Margherita Taylor **6.00** Classic FM at the Movies with Jonathan Ross **8.00** Classical Spotlight with Alexander Armstrong **10.00** Calm Classics **2.00am** Katie Breathwick

television

PICKS OF THE DAY

Elgar at the Proms
BBC4, 7pm

The BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra returns to the Proms with a programme that places Edward Elgar's First Symphony alongside two works that reflect contemporary creativity in very different ways. Under the direction of Ryan Wigglesworth, the evening features the soprano Claire Booth and the BBC Singers joining forces for a concert that moves from the cosmic to the intimately poetic before arriving at one of the great pillars of the English orchestral tradition. Judith Weir's *Moon and Star* opens the programme, inspired by the Emily Dickinson poem of similar title. The centrepiece of the first half is the world premiere of Brett Dean's *The World's Wife*, a 20-minute orchestral setting for the poetry of the former poet laureate Carol Ann Duffy. After the interval, the nobility of Elgar's Symphony No 1, a sensation from its 1908 premiere onwards. **Helen Stewart**

Elgar at the Proms (BBC4, 7pm)

The Last Miner in the Band
BBC1, 7.30pm

This edition in the *Our Lives* strand focuses on Easington Colliery Band, a vital Durham community asset: when 83 men died in one of the region's worst pit disasters, it played at every victim's funeral. However, the only miner still playing, Peter Lawson, is preparing to retire and this film asks whether the band can survive without this vital link to its past. Younger generations should note: there is a shortage of good bass trombonists. **Victoria Segal**

8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown
Channel 4, 9pm

A mere whippersnapper compared with its daytime parent show, Channel 4 could scarcely have thought as they scratched around for an amusing hybrid back in 2012 that the experiment would result in such a successful spin-off. With

BBC1

6.00am Breakfast
9.30 Animal Park (r) (AD)
10.15 Trace, Track, Get My Car Back (r)
10.45 Expert Witness (r)
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer (r)
12.15pm Bargain Hunt
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 The Hairdresser Mysteries. The sudden death of a performer rocks preparations for a celebratory concert at the theatre (AD)
2.45 Escape to the Country. A search for a stone cottage on the island of Anglesey (r)
3.45 The Bidding Room. The dealers are offered a collection of *Star Wars* figurines, a vintage skateboard and a bronze mask
4.30 The Travelling Auctioneers. A pair of siblings hope they can turn heirlooms into a once-in-a-lifetime holiday (r) (AD)
5.15 Pointless. Quiz show (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

7.00 **The One Show** Weekday magazine hosted by Vernon Kay and JB Gill

7.30 **Our Lives: The Last Miner in the Band** Durham's Easington Colliery Band prepare for an important concert. *See picks of the day*

8.00 **Granite Harbour** The team recover the murder weapon and find leads that challenge their assumptions as tensions across the Loughty estate reach breaking point (2/3) (AD)

9.00 **Would I Lie to You?** With panellists Kadeena Cox, Ivo Graham, Harriet Kemsley and Eddie Marsan (3/9) (r)

9.30 **Ann Droid** Linda drags Sue to scatter ashes by the sea, which sparks a trip to a funfair where a rollercoaster ride ends up going wrong (3/6) (AD)

10.00 **BBC News at Ten**

10.30 **BBC Regional News and Weather**

10.40 **Austin** Austin follows a romcom manual to woo Haley (7/8) (AD)

11.05 **Austin** Ingrid quits Big Bear, Austin cancels fame, Mel races to stop a resignation, and Haley might be the one. Last in the series (AD)

11.35 **FILM: Scent of a Woman (15, 1992)** A blind, hard-drinking former soldier pays a timid college student to accompany him on a wild weekend after which he plans to kill himself. Comedy drama starring Al Pacino and Chris O'Donnell (AD)

2.10am-6.00 BBC News

BBC2

6.30am Money for Nothing (r)
7.15 The Bidding Room (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: Marcus Wareing Simply Provence. Compilation edition (r) (SL)
9.00 BBC News
12.50pm Lifeline (r) (AD)
1.00 Richard Osman's House of Games. Contestants include Dennis Taylor (r)
1.30 The Finish Line. Quiz show (r)
2.15 Lightning. Quiz hosted by Zoe Lyons (r)
2.45 The Hairy Bikers' Bakeation. The duo bake their way through Austria (r) (AD)
3.45 The Farmers' Country Showdown. Local food purveyors attend Shipbourne Farmers' Market to sell their wares (r)
4.15 Hippos: Africa's River Giants. A look at the life of the hippopotamus (r) (AD)
5.15 Flog It! Finds from various locations (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games. Karen Hauer, Storm Huntley, Joe Marler and Tom Read Wilson take part on the quiz (r)
6.30 Just One Thing. Clive Myrie extols the benefits of doing press-ups (r) (AD)

7.00 **Iolo's Anglesey** Iolo Williams looks at the flora and fauna of Anglesey, Wales' largest island (1/4) (r)

7.30 **Beechgrove Garden** The team plans for winter, with Ruth Vichos showing how to cultivate snowdrops and Calum Clunie collecting lupin seeds

8.00 **Gardeners' World** Monty Don refreshes his borders with late-summer perennials, Adam Frost visits Barnsdale, reflecting on Geoff Hamilton's influence, and Carol Klein explores underground plant-microbe partnerships. *See picks of the day*

9.00 **Bergerac** A threatening letter corroborates Jim's hunch that they have the wrong people in custody for Cate's murder (3/6) (AD)

9.45 **QI XL** Sandi Toksvig hosts an extended edition with Maisie Adam, Susan Calman, Josh Widdicombe and Alan Davies answering questions on the theme of testing (r)

10.30 **Newsnight** With Paddy O'Connell

11.00 **FILM: Chuck Chuck Baby (15, 2024)** A woman who lives with her former husband and his girlfriend seeks romance while toiling at the local chicken factory. Drama starring Louise Brealey and Annabel Scholey

12.40am Golf: Women's Open Highlights Action from day two of the Major Championship in Lancashire **1.40** Sign Zone: Amityville: An Origin Story (r) (AD, SL) **2.30** Andy Burnham: The Laura Kuenssberg Interview (r) (SL) **3.00-3.30** Natalie Cassidy: Caring Together (r) (AD, SL)

ITV1

6.00am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning
1.00pm ITV News; Weather
1.30 ITV Racing. Ed Chamberlin and Francesca Cumani present live coverage of day four of the Glorious Goodwood meeting, including feature race the Qatar King George Stakes, and four more supporting races. With analysis from Jason Weaver and Hayley Turner, reports by Rishi Persad, Sally Ann Grassick and Luke Harvey, and race commentary provided by Mark Johnson
4.30 Tipping Point: Best Ever Finals. Compilation edition featuring some of the most dramatic endgames from the arcade-themed quiz hosted by Ben Shephard (r)
5.00 The Chase. Bradley Walsh presents as four more contestants attempt to answer general knowledge questions and work as a team to take on one of the ruthless Chasers and secure a lucrative cash prize (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

7.30 **Abbey Clancy: Celebrity Homes** Abbey visits homes belonging to Sheree Murphy and Caprice (4/6)

8.00 **Emmerdale** Claudette makes an admission, while Nicola fears her love life with Jimmy is growing stale (AD)

8.30 **Coronation Street** Cassie runs out of second chances with Steve and Tyrone, and Betsy navigates big changes upon her return home (AD)

9.00 **The Twisted Tale of Amanda Knox** As Raffaele's trial stretches into years, his heartbreaking history unfolds. He is pressured to separate his defence from Amanda's before the final verdict (5/8) (AD)

10.05 **The Twisted Tale of Amanda Knox** After the verdict, Amanda sinks into depression and prison life. As her appeal nears and new facts emerge, she vows not to repeat the mistakes of her first trial (6/8) (AD)

11.05 **ITV News at Ten; Weather;** followed by Regional News

11.55 **Inside the Langham: Britain's First Grand Hotel** A wedding planner pulls out all the stops to deliver a breathtaking ceremony (2/6) (r) (AD)

12.30am Shop on TV 3.00 Force of Nature (r) (AD, SL) **3.50** Long Lost Family (r) (AD, SL) **4.45-6.00** Unwind with ITV

Channel 4

6.25am Cheers (r)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD)
9.10 Frasier (r) (AD)
11.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. Help for a Southern cuisine restaurant (r)
12.05pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It. An old television cabinet is turned into a dog bed (r) (AD)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway. A grade II listed building in Liverpool is renovated (r)
2.10 Countdown. With television personality Scarlett Moffatt in Dictionary Corner
3.00 A Place in the Sun. A West Midlands couple seek a holiday home in Lanzarote (r)
4.00 Narrow Escapes. A family begin their continuous cruising life after spending their first night on board their new home (r) (AD)
5.00 Château DIY. A couple living in the Dordogne struggle to install a kitchen before the arrival of their first baby (r) (AD)
6.00 American Pickers. Mike Wolfe finds a rare Ford, and the guys pick a Tennessee home that is hiding a big secret (r) (AD)

7.00 **Channel 4 News**

8.00 **Surgery Secrets of the Super Rich** A businesswoman marks her 60th birthday with an endoscopic facelift, a fitness guru has electromagnetic body sculpting and a model from Malta undergoes a laser procedure to tighten her jawline (3/6) (AD)

9.00 **8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown** New series. Jimmy Carr hosts as Jon Richardson and Harriet Kemsley take on Rob Beckett and Richard Ayoade. Special guests Nick Mohammed and Joe Wilkinson join Susie Dent and Rachel Riley. *See picks of the day*

10.00 **Big Fat Quiz: Best Bits** Jimmy Carr feels the wrath of Michael McIntyre, Fatiha El-Ghorri, Harry Hill, Stacey Solomon and more, as the perplexed panellists take their quizzing qualms out on the question master himself

11.05 **Sarah Millican: Thoroughly Modern Millican Live** Stand-up performance, recorded at London's Hammersmith Apollo during the comedian's 2012 UK tour, featuring various anecdotes on life's humdrum curiosities (r)

12.10am Ramy New series. Return of the comedy about a first-generation American Muslim-Arab living in New Jersey. Starring Ramy Youssef (AD) **1.20 FILM: Fresh (18, 2022)** Comedy horror with Daisy Edgar-Jones **3.10** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (r) **3.55-6.05** Four in a Bed (r)

5

6.00am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis
12.45pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright
2.20 FILM: Conceived in Lies (15, TVM, 2024) A widowed first-time mother discovers a labyrinth of deceit that leads her back to the fertility clinic where her son was conceived. Thriller starring Holly Deveaux
4.00 Castle. An ER physician is killed in the street and Castle and Beckett soon discover that the victim was a Mob doctor to a Mafia family run by an old friend of the author (r)
4.55 Love Nature. An edition explaining the history of sea glass on Seaham beach (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Malta: The Jewel of the Med. Cameras focus on Malta's most skilful boat pilots as they navigate the Grand Harbour, and a look at the English pub where actor Oliver Reed ordered his last round. Last in the series (r)
6.55 5 News Update

7.00 **Holiday Scams: Don't Get Caught Out** Alexis Conran and his team take on the scammers who target people's wallets, documents and plans when travelling, whether it is in the UK or on the far side of the world (r)

7.55 **5 News Update**

8.00 **Michael Palin in Venezuela** The presenter starts the final leg of his adventure across Venezuela, as he enters Zulia state, which is on the UK Foreign Office no visit 'red zone' list. Last in the series (r) (AD)

9.00 **Britain's Killer Wave of 1607** Scientists, geologists and historians examine the Bristol Channel floods of 1607, looking at whether the freak weather phenomenon that caused it was a storm surge or a tsunami (r)

10.00 **Commonwealth Games 2026** Highlights from the eighth day of the competition in Glasgow, which saw gold medals awarded in judo, athletics and para athletics, plus track cycling and para track cycling

11.05 **Piers Morgan: Uncensored** The bold, opinion-led news and debate show hosted by Piers Morgan

1.00am Cruise TV with LoveitBookit (r) **2.00** Shoplifters: Catch Me If You Can. Alleged thieves in exclusive stores (r) **2.50** Malta: The Jewel of the Med (r) **3.45** Friends (r) (AD) **4.35** The Highland Vet (r) (SL) **5.25** Entertainment News on 5 **5.35** Milo (r) (SL) **5.45-6.00** Adventures of Paddington (r) (SL)

Jimmy Carr as headmaster and bully, the show surfs a wave of surreal humour, mathematics, ritual humiliation, spelling and conundrums. Rachel Riley, who joined *Countdown* itself in 2009, provides the arithmetical authority and, with the time-served lexicographer Susie Dent (1992), the long-suffering groans. Team captains Jon Richardson and Rob Beckett are joined by Harriet Kemsley and Richard Ayoade. The special guests are Nick Mohammed and Joe Wilkinson. **HS**

Gardeners' World
BBC2, 8pm

If this show teaches you anything, it's that committed horticulturalists rarely get a chance to live in the moment: as summer hits its peak Monty Don is planning ahead, thinking about future vegetable harvests. He also refreshes his borders with late-season perennials and tames a rambling rose. There is also a chance to look back, though, with Adam Frost's tribute to the *Gardeners' World* stalwart Geoff Hamilton and his enduring garden at Barnsdale. **VS**

STREAMING CHOICE

Snoopy Presents: There's No Place Like Home, Snoopy
Apple TV

When Charlie Brown's little sister, Sally, organises a yard sale she manages to offload everything, including a doll's house. Well, what she accidentally flogged was Snoopy's doghouse. Cue a series of wistful reminiscences about the importance of place in which Snoopy and Woodstock realise the importance of friendship. As ever, the highlights for us adults are the melancholy interludes with good ol' Charlie Brown. **Andrew Male**

FILM CHOICE

Normal (15, 2026)
Sky Cinema Premiere/Now, 8pm

Ben Wheatley directs this fabulous Bob Odenkirk action flick about a regular Mr Normal who craves a normal life, but must first obliterate a billion bad guys. This project was conceived by Odenkirk during the filming of 2021's *Nobody* (Odenkirk's other action franchise) and it plays like a deliberate antidote to that brutal series. Odenkirk's Sheriff Ulysses has been abandoned by his wife and is clinging to a faltering career. The stage is set for the entrance of a gang of Japanese yakuza thugs and lots of gunfire, neck-snapping and exploding corpses. (88min) **Kevin Maher**

BBC4

7.00pm Elgar at the Proms. Ryan Wigglesworth conducts the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, who take to the stage at the Royal Albert Hall in London for Elgar's First Symphony. *See picks of the day*
8.25 TOTP: 2000. With music by Shania Twain, Jay-Z, Eels, and more
8.55 TOTP: 2000. Acts include Tom Jones & Stereophonics, and Kelis
9.25 TOTP: 1977. Including music by Showaddywaddy and Thin Lizzy
9.55 TOTP: 1983. Including music by Elvis Costello and the Attractions
10.35 Louis Armstrong in Concert. The legendary trumpeter performs during his 1968 British tour
11.30 Louis Armstrong — Show of the Week. A performance by the jazz legend and his band from 1968
12.35am Jazz Legends in Their Own Words **1.35** TOTP: 2000 **2.35** TOTP: 1977 **3.05am-3.40** TOTP: 1983

BBC3

7.00pm The Catch Up
7.05 Quiet Life. Comedy short
7.15 Deadly 60. Marine life in the waters of British Columbia
7.45 FILM: Night at the Museum (PG, 2006) Fantasy comedy starring Ben Stiller and Dick Van Dyke (AD)
9.30 Ludwig. John tries to prove Lucy's innocence as she becomes embroiled in a murder plot (AD)
10.30 Ghosts Australia. Remake of the supernatural sitcom starring Tamala Shelton and Rowan Witt
10.55 Ghosts Australia. Kate accepts that the ghosts are real
11.15 Ghosts Australia. Kate's plans are derailed by a treasure hunt
11.40 Fleabag. At an uncomfortable family dinner, Fleabag finds herself intrigued by a handsome priest (AD)
12.10am Fleabag. Five episodes of the comedy (AD) **2.25am-3.50** Ideal

Variations

BBC1 Scotland
11.35pm Sportscene. Highlights of Dundee United v Rangers 12.05am FILM: Scent of a Woman (1992) 2.40am-6.00 BBC News

BBC1 Wales
7.30pm-8.00 Best of Weatherman Walking. Mountain walks

ITV1 Wales
7.00pm-7.30 Coast & Country

STV
7.00pm The STV Radio Football Takeover 7.30-8.00 What's on Scotland 12.30am-3.00 Shop on TV 4.45am-6.00 Unwind with STV

UTV
7.00pm UTV Life 7.30-8.00 Hidden Northern Ireland 11.55pm-12.30am Abbey Clancy: Celebrity Homes

Sky Arts

6.00am Classic FM Live Summer Concert 2026 **8.00** The Joy of Painting **9.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **10.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.00** Discovering: Charles Bronson (AD)
12.00 FILM: Agatha Christie's Sparkling Cyanide (12, TVM, 2003)
1.55pm The Alfred Hitchcock Hour (b/w) **3.00** The Seventies (AD) **4.00** Discovering: Peter O'Toole (AD)
5.00 Portrait Artist of the Year 2021. Nick Mason is the sitter (AD)
6.00 Tales of the Unexpected (AD)
7.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents
8.00 Pet Shop Boys: Dreamworld — Greatest Hits: Live in Copenhagen
10.20 Guy Garvey: From the Vaults
11.20 Gary Numan Resurrection
1.00am Greatest Albums Live **2.00** Boy George & Culture Club **4.00** The Art of the Garden **5.00am-6.00** Julie Andrews Forever (AD)

ITV2

6.00am Backyard Builds (SL)
6.30 Deal or No Deal (AD) **7.30** Dress to Impress (AD, SL) **8.25** Sam and Billie: Sister Act **9.25** The Only Way Is Essex **10.25** The Real Housewives of Salt Lake City **11.20** The Real Housewives of Orange County **12.10pm** Dinner Date (AD)
1.10 Supermarket Sweep **2.10** The Floor USA (AD) **3.10** The Only Way Is Essex **4.10** The Real Housewives of Salt Lake City **5.00** The Real Housewives of Orange County
6.00 Celebrity Catchphrase (AD)
7.00 The Floor USA (AD)
8.00 The 1% Club (AD)
9.00 The Princess Diaries. Princess makes a big decision (4/4)
10.00 Family Guy. Triple bill (AD)
11.30 American Dad! (AD)
12.35am Bob's Burgers (AD)
1.30am-2.25 Deal or No Deal (AD)

BBC Scotland
7.00pm Reporting Scotland: News at Seven 7.30 Scotland's Greatest Escape (r) 8.00 Paramedics on Scene (r) 9.00 Rikki (r) 10.00 Still Game (r) 10.30 Two Doors Down (r) 11.00pm-12.00 Rip It Up (r)

S4C
6.00am Cyw 12.00 News 12.05pm Pysgod i Bawb (r) 12.30 Heno (r) 1.00 Y Ci Perffaith (r) 1.30 Dan Do (r) 2.00 News 2.05 Prynhawn Da 3.00 News 3.05 Ty Ffit (r) 4.00 Awr Fawr: Octonots (r) 4.10 Og y Draenog Hapus (r) 4.20 Misho (r) 4.30 Joni Jet (r) 4.45 Parc Glan Gwil (r) 5.00 Stwnsh: Byd Rwtsh Dai Potsh (r) 5.15 Y Doniolis (r) 5.25 Taclo'r Tywydd (r) 5.45 Y Smyrffs (r) 6.00 Gerddi Cymru (r) 6.30 Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 7.30 News 8.00 Gemau'r Gymanwlad 2026 10.30pm-11.35 Gwesty Aduniad (r)

More4

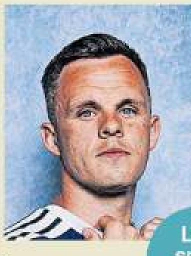
8.55am Heir Hunters **10.00** Four in a Bed **12.40pm** Come Dine with Me (AD) **3.20** Four in a Bed **5.50** George Clarke's Old House, New Home (AD)
6.55 Location, Location, Location. Home searches in West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester (AD)
7.55 Grand Designs. The progress of a family home that is inspired by a giant farm shed (3/12) (AD)
9.00 The Sommerdahl Murders. Dan is deeply affected by a murder and delves into the crime on top of the Josefine Sundby investigation, but is frustrated when he comes under suspicion. In Danish
11.00 24 Hours in A&E. Medical staff treat an unresponsive baby who has a high fever (2/6) (AD)
12.00 24 Hours in A&E (AD)
1.05am 999: On the Front Line (AD)
2.05 24 Hours in A&E (AD)
3.10am-3.40 A Place in the Sun

ITV3

6.00am George and Mildred **7.05** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **8.10** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **9.10** A Touch of Frost (AD) **11.20** Heartbeat (AD) **1.30pm** Midsomer Murders (AD) **3.35** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **4.10** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **5.50** Heartbeat. Rural drama series (AD)
8.00 Doc Martin. Morwenna's parents visit, while Louisa's online course does not go well (4/8) (AD)
9.00 Doc Martin. Louisa has problems at school (5/8) (AD)
10.00 Grantchester. A man is killed by an unseen assailant, and Sidney is drawn to an activist (1/6) (AD)
11.00 Grantchester. With Violet gone, Sidney loses himself in drink — leaving Geordie worried (2/6) (AD)
11.50 Trial & Retribution (2/10)
1.25am-2.25 Wycliffe

PBS America

8.00am America the Bountiful **8.35** Conquistadors: The Rise and Fall **9.40** Pirates: Behind the Legends **10.40** Maps of Power **11.50** Clearing the Air: The War on Smog **1.00pm** America the Bountiful **1.35** Conquistadors: The Rise and Fall **2.35** Pirates: Behind the Legends **3.35** Maps of Power **4.45** Clearing the Air: The War on Smog **5.55** America the Bountiful
6.25 Conquistadors: The Rise and Fall. How Christopher Columbus began a new age for Spain's empire
7.30 Pirates: Behind the Legends. Telling the story of Henry Morgan
8.30 Maps of Power. How China's geopolitical importance stems from its historical position (3/3)
9.45 1945: The Savage Peace
11.00 Pirates: Behind the Legends
12.00 Maps of Power **1.15am-2.00** America the Bountiful



Live sport today

Lawrence Shankland of Rangers, Live SPFL

Live Women's Golf
Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports Golf, 9am-7pm
Coverage of day two of the Women's Open Championship at Royal Lytham & St Annes Golf Club in Lancashire

Live Tennis
Sky Sports +, 5pm-7.30, Sky Sports Tennis, 5pm-2am
Day five of the Washington DC Open at William H.G. FitzGerald Tennis Center in the USA

Live The Hundred:
Manchester Super Giants Men v Trent Rockets Men
Sky Sports Cricket, 6pm-9.30
(Start-time **6.30**). From Old Trafford Cricket Ground

Live SPFL:
Dundee United v Rangers
Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports Football, 7pm-10.30
(Kick-off **8.00**). From Tannadice

Live Super League: Leigh Leopards v Wigan Warriors
Sky Sports +, Sky Sports Action, 7.30pm-10.15
(Kick-off **8.00**). Coverage of the match at Leigh Sports Village

Sky Atlantic

6.00am Richard E Grant's Hotel Secrets (r) (AD) **8.00** Billions (r) (AD) **10.10** Task (r) (AD) **12.30pm** Homicide: Life on the Street (r) **2.20** Billions (r) (AD) **4.30** Task (r) (AD)
6.45 True Detective: Night Country. Danvers and Prior set out to learn more about Tsalal (r) (AD)
7.55 True Detective: Night Country. Navarro and Danvers get a tip about a former Tsalal worker (3/6) (r) (AD)
9.00 Station Eleven. Miranda reflects on her relationships with Arthur and Dr Eleven (3/10)
10.00 Station Eleven. Kirsten nudges the Traveling Symphony off-course to help unravel the mystery of the Prophet (4/10)
11.00 Prisoner (r) (AD)
12.00 The Last of Us. Drama series (r) (AD) **1.00am** Task (r) (AD) **3.15** Billions (r) (AD) **4.15am-6.00** The Guest Wing (r) (AD)

Talking Pictures

6.00am FILM: Johnny on the Spot (U, 1954) 7.30 Automatic Fare Collection and You in 1969 **7.35 FILM: Desert Mice (U, 1959)** (b/w) **9.15 FILM: It's a Wonderful World (U, 1956) 11.00** The Lucy Show **11.30 FILM: Laxdale Hall (U, 1953)** (b/w) **1.05pm** The Edgar Wallace Mystery Theatre (b/w) **2.15** The Adventures of Robin Hood (b/w) **2.45 FILM: Maybe I'll Come Home In The Spring (12, TVM, 1971) 4.20** Song Festival **4.30** The Cheaters (b/w) **5.00** A Family at War
6.00 Hannay
7.00 Z Cars (b/w)
8.00 Public Eye
9.05 FILM: Eyewitness (15, 1970)
11.00pm Supernatural (5/8)
12.05am FILM: The Manster (18, 1960) Sci-fi horror (b/w) **1.40am-3.15 FILM: Children Shouldn't Play with Dead Things (15, 1973)**

ITV4

6.00am Magnum, PI **7.00** Dempsey and Makepeace (AD) **9.10** Boon **10.15** The Professionals (AD) **11.25** Robin of Sherwood **12.30pm** Magnum, PI **2.35** Dempsey and Makepeace (AD) **3.45** Boon **4.50** The Professionals (AD)
6.00 River Monsters. Hunting a fish suspected of killing a woman
6.30 British Touring Car Championship Highlights. From Thruxton Circuit in Hampshire
8.00 Beat the Chasers — Celebrity Special. Contestants include Jonathan Ross and Edwina Currie
9.00 Ice Road Truckers: Deadliest Roads. The Rohtang Pass (7/10)
10.00 All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite
12.00 Dark Side of the Ring. Chris Benoit **1.00am** Minder (AD, SL)
1.55-2.45 Two and a Half Men
3.30am-4.00 Motorsport Mundial

Sky Docs

6.00am The 2000s (r) **7.00** Discovering: Ian McKellen (r) (AD) **8.00** The Directors (r) (AD) **9.00** Urban Secrets (r) **10.00** Surviving Ohio State (r) **12.00** On the Line: The Richard Williams Story (r) (AD) **1.50pm** My Icon: Kadeen Corbin (r) (AD) **2.00 FILM: Bobby Robson: More Than a Manager (12, 2018)** (AD) **4.00** The Directors (r) (AD)
5.00 Discovering: Ian McKellen. The life and career of the actor (r) (AD)
6.00 FILM: Man on Wire (12, 2008) A tightrope walk between the World Trade Center towers in 1974
8.00 Rik Mayall: Magnificent B'stard. Tribute to the comedy actor (r)
10.00 Fatboy Slim: Right Here, Right Now. The story of a 2002 event (r)
11.50 FILM: Val (12, 2021) (AD)
2.00am Ren Faire. All three editions of the series (r) (AD) **5.05am-6.00** Discovering: Ian McKellen (r) (AD)

Film4

11.00am Anastasia (U, 1997) Animated adventure with the voice of Meg Ryan **12.50pm Arabesque (12, 1966)** Spy thriller starring Gregory Peck **3.00 Heaven Knows, Mr Allison (PG, 1957)** Romantic drama starring Robert Mitchum and Deborah Kerr **5.05 The Emperor's New Clothes (PG, 2001)** Drama starring Ian Holm and Iben Hjejle
7.15 Daddy's Home (12, 2015) Comedy starring Will Ferrell, Mark Wahlberg and Linda Cardellini (AD)
9.00 The Green Mile (18, 1999) A prison guard amazed by the healing power and gentle nature of a man on death row comes to doubt his guilt. Supernatural drama starring Tom Hanks, Michael Clarke Duncan and David Morse (AD)
12.45am-3.30 The Empty Man (18, 2020) Mystery horror with James Badge Dale and Marin Ireland

U&Drama

6.00am Teleshopping **7.20** The Bill **8.15** Doctors **9.30** Classic Holby City **10.50** Casualty (AD) **11.50** The Bill **12.50pm** Classic EastEnders **2.00** Neighbours **3.00** Pie in the Sky **4.05** Lovejoy **5.20** As Time Goes By
6.00 Last of the Summer Wine
8.00 Father Brown. A visit to a holiday camp leads to another mystery for the sleuthing cleric (AD)
9.00 Father Brown. Bunty reunites with the cleric to uncover a dark secret and mysterious goings-on at the local girls' borstal (AD)
10.00 New Tricks. The team help a man who believes his apparently dead wife is still alive (3/8) (AD)
11.20 Silent Witness. Nikki travels to Mexico to attend a funeral (AD)
1.55am Lovejoy **2.40** As Time Goes By **3.10** Darby and Joan (SL)
4.00am-6.00 Teleshopping

U&Yesterday

6.10am Abandoned Engineering (AD) **8.00** Bangers & Cash (AD) **10.00** Secret Nazi Bases **11.00** Auschwitz: The Nazis and the Final Solution **12.00** Antiques Roadshow **2.00pm** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics (AD) **4.00** Secret Nazi Bases **5.00** Auschwitz: The Nazis and the Final Solution
6.00 Antiques Roadshow
7.00 Asia. Animals that live in Asia's deserts and dry grasslands (AD)
8.00 Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em. Comedy starring Michael Crawford
10.00 One Foot in the Grave
10.40 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics. A low mileage MGC (AD)
11.40 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics. A Reliant Robin (AD)
12.40am Bangers & Cash (AD)
1.40 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (AD) **2.35** Great British Railway Journeys
3.00am-6.10 Teleshopping

MindGames

Backgammon Chris Bray

Pressure at Monte Carlo

As you read this article with your morning muesli, the final stages of this year's world championship will be getting under way in Monte Carlo. Most finals produce moments of pure theatre, and today we are going to travel back in time to 2003. That year's final was contested by Moshe Tissona of Israel and Jon Royset of Norway.

In the match to 25 points, the two were tied at 17-17. The next game was pivotal. Early on, Royset (White) had the advantage and doubled his opponent, but gradually Tissona turned the game round. When he threw three sets of double fives to take the lead in the race, the position below was reached with Tissona (Black) on roll. He redoubled and Royset pondered.

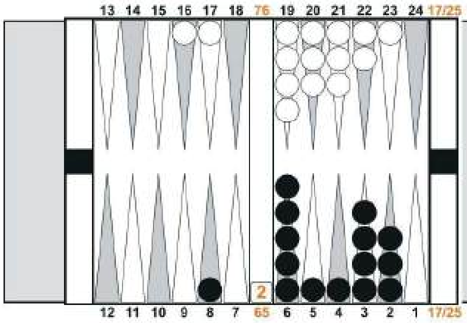
The bookmaker who had taken a €400 (then about £280) bet on Tissona at 400-1 before the start of the tournament began to look very pale. The crowd of some 300 spectators (including your columnist) watching on closed-circuit TV were calling on Royset to pass. Time seemed to stand still. After ten minutes' deep study (there were no clocks in those days), he accepted the redouble. The crowd couldn't believe it. The bookmaker's colour went off the scale. After Black bore off three checkers with double twos, credibility was stretched to breaking point when Royset threw boxes (double sixes) — pandemonium! Four rolls later, he rolled double fives and shortly thereafter claimed four points.

Tissona was visibly broken, and the rest of the match, though not without its moments, was something of an anticlimax, Royset winning 25-20.

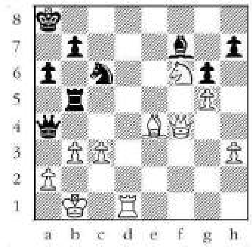
Now the key question: was it a take? The debate continued long into the night, and it wasn't finally settled until computers got involved. The verdict was that Royset should have dropped but only by the tiniest of margins. On the pip count alone, it would have been a clear drop, but White's better checker distribution made it extremely close to a take. Royset was applauded for having the courage to take the redouble under the most extreme pressure.

The bookmaker was last seen imbibing a glass of champagne.

chrisbraybg@gmail.com



Winning Move



White to play.
This position is a variation from Sargsyan-Nazari, Titled Tuesday, chess.com 2026.

White is a pawn ahead here but needs to negotiate some serious problems. First, Black has a powerful threat to play ... Bxb3 which will lead to carnage. Second, there is an awkward pin against the e4-bishop so the natural defence 1 Bc2 allows 1 ... Qxf4. Can you spot White's ingenious tactical solution?

Codeword No 5907

20	5	23	5	21	13	■	21	18	23	9	5	2
■	26	■	4	■	1	■	16	■	21	■	9	■
12	6	9	19	2	2	5	18	■	22	5	5	6
■	5	■	21	■	18	■	1	■	3	■	16	■
10	13	3	2	■	3	17	20	19	18	21	2	5
■	20	■	3	■	19	■	■	■	■	■	18	■
8	21	9	18	19	12	■	11	3	17	13	3	17
■	17	■	■	■	■	■	3	■	18	■	16	■
13	1	11	1	9	1	12	2	■	21	18 R	19 U	23 M
■	9	■	13	■	12	■	25	■	15	■	2	■
7	1	13	14	■	12	6	3	18	21	20	1	16
■	2	■	3	■	19	■	3	■	20	■	3	■
23	24	18	2	9	5	■	2	11	3	18	13	24

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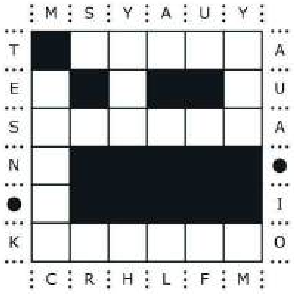
A B C D E F G H I J K L ~~M~~ N O P Q ~~R~~ S T ~~U~~ V W X Y Z

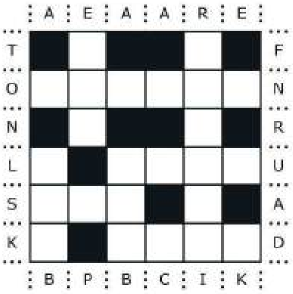
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 R	19 U	20	21	22	23 M	24	25	26

Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded. *Yesterday's solution, right*

Cluelines **Stuck on Codeword?** To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. If you have an old newspaper and need clues from the past 7 days, call 0905 624 0024. Calls to 0905 cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

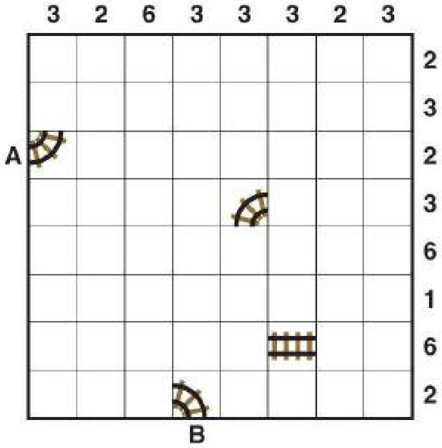
Lexica Easy No 9025 Hard No 9026





Slide the letters either horizontally or vertically back into the grid to produce a completed crossword. Letters are allowed to slide over other letters

Train Tracks No 2932



Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

Quintagram® No 2634

Solve all five **cryptic** clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Second working satellite (4)

_ _ _ _

2 Where you might bet company welcomes American greed? (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

3 Doctor barely knocked back drink and seafood (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

4 Loud noise from below after trough emptied (7)

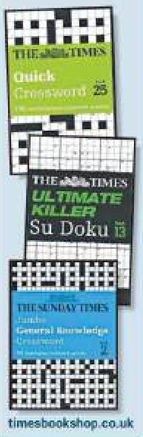
_ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Add-ons I'm changing for suit (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	C	C	D	D	D	E
H	I	I	M	M	N	N	N
N	O	O	O	O	O	O	P
R	S	S	S	T	T	U	U

Challenge your mind with puzzle books from The Times


THE TIMES Quick Crossword 25
THE TIMES ULTIMATE KILLER Su Doku 13
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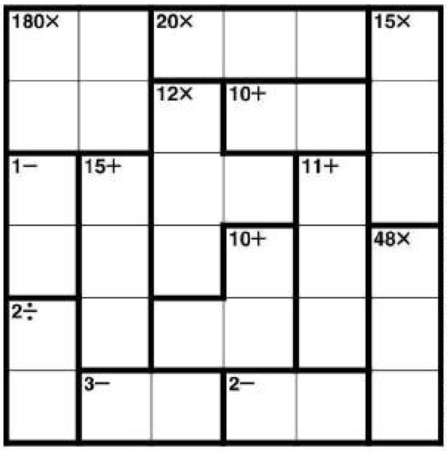
KenKen Difficult No 6899



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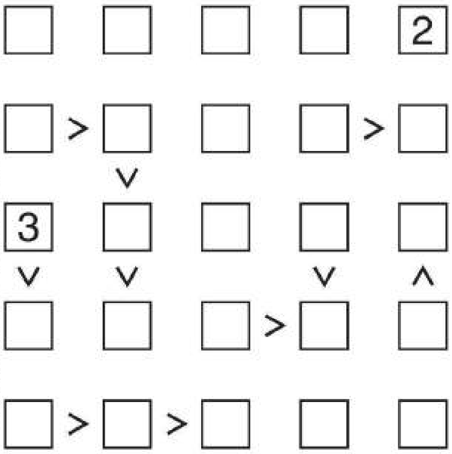
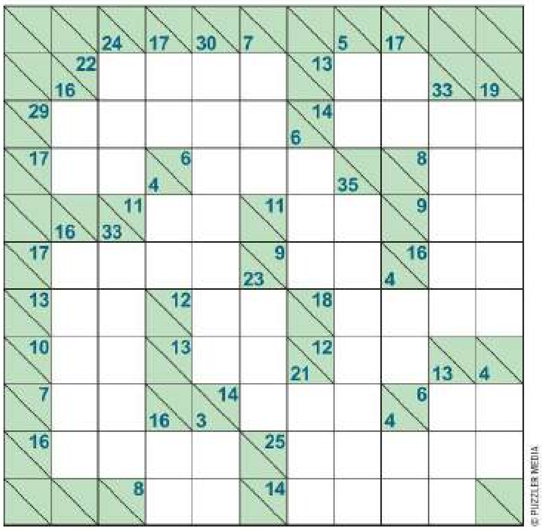
All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

Futoshiki No 5447



Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

Kakuro No 4406



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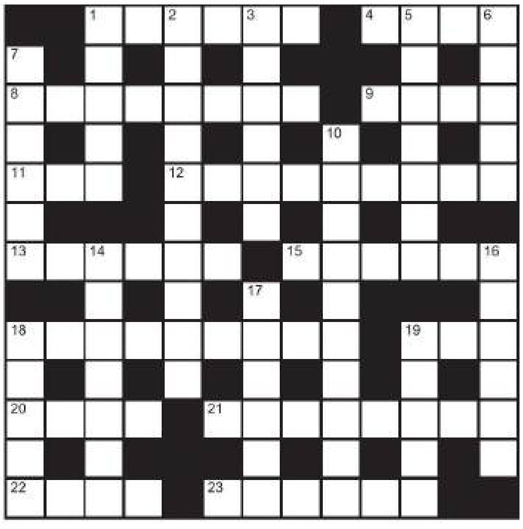
Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

times2 Crossword No 10,223



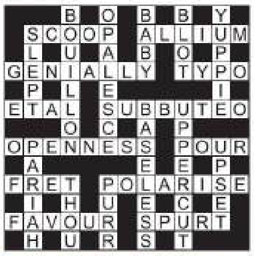
Across

1 Church room (6)
4 Bloke (4)
8 Clapping (8)
9 Group bonded by kinship (4)
11 Wine such as chianti (3)
12 Fire and ---, impassioned religious rhetoric (9)
13 Followed closely (6)
15 Dairy spread (6)
18 Garden pollinator (9)
19 Go by air (3)
20 Traditional learning (4)
21 US sport (8)
22 Gap, space (4)
23 Desisted (6)

Down

1 Uninteresting, banal (5)
2 Large insect (4,6)
3 Bucolic (6)
5 Assist (4,3)
6 Short pasta tubes with angled ends (5)
7 Tropical bird (6)
10 Acumen (10)
14 Unprincipled (7)
16 Members of a monarchy (6)
17 Rub away, wear down (6)
18 Burp (5)
19 Criminal deception (5)

Solution to Crossword 10,222



Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Bridge
Andrew Robson

We begin our next Top Twenty series

Top Twenty Conventions

In no particular order of importance

1. Take-out double

The take-out double is so entrenched in the parlance that one doesn't think of it as a convention. However, strictly speaking, in bridge a double is a bet that the contract won't make — in order to increase the size of the penalty: known these days as a "penalty double".

It was soon realised that the double of an opening suit bid was not best used as penalty — after all, the doubler's partner hasn't bid and could have anything. The language evolved so that, until partner has bid, double is best used as an artificial device to ask her to take out the opposing bid, a "take-out double".

Indeed, the language is continuing to evolve so that some doubles are take-out (or have contextual "take-outy" meanings) even if partner *has* bid. More on that later.

Meantime, consider these doubles (opposing calls in brackets).

(a) (1♥)-Dbl.
(b) (1♣)-P-(1♥)-Dbl.
(c) (1♥)-P-(1♠)-P-(2♠)-Dbl.
(d) (1♥)-P-(2♥)-P-(P)-Dbl.
(e) (1NT)-Dbl.
(f) (1♥)-P-(1NT)-Dbl.

(a) Classic take-out double, showing an "SOS" hand-type: Support (three or more cards) in the unbid suits — and ideally four spades (but bid 1♠ with five); Opening points or more; Shortage (fewer than three cards) in the opponent's suit. Eg ♠KJ62, ♥74, ♦AQ3, ♣Q842 but don't be too much of a purist (*see deal*).

(b) Take-out of both opposing suits, guaranteeing at least four-four in the unbid suits. Eg ♠AJ62, ♥J4, ♦AQ753, ♣42.

(c) Again for take-out, stymied on the first round eg ♠2, ♥K62, ♦AJ74, ♣AJ432 (NOT a 2♣ overcall).

(d) Take-out but not to be taken seriously as you couldn't call last time. Now you're in the protective ("cheat") seat, you must be bold — to push them up a level. eg ♠J742, ♥862, ♦A8, ♣AJ72.

(e) Penalty. The double of a 1NT opener is, uniquely, not for take-out (how can you be short in notrumps?), showing any hand with 16 or more points. If you have a good opening lead, you can shade that eg ♠K2, ♥A2, ♦AKJ1062, ♣1083.

(f) Take-out of hearts, like (a).

Dealer W

North: ♠K632 ♥942 ♦A4 ♣AQ65
West: ♠Q8 ♥AKQJ7 ♦108 ♣J843
East: ♠J4 ♥85 ♦J96532 ♣1097
South: ♠A10975 ♥1063 ♦KQ7 ♣K2

S	W	N	E
	1♥	Dbl(1)	Pass
4♠ (2)	End		

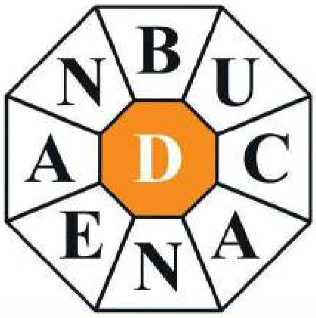
(1) Correctly not letting the heart too many and the diamond too few put her off.
(2) The one rule the doubler won't break is having at least three cards in the other major (and preferably four).

West cashed ♥AKQ then led ♥7 (best). East ruffed with ♠J but declarer overruffed with ♠A, ran ♠10 then led to (♠Q and) ♠K. Ten tricks. andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

Brain Trainer

EASY	8	x 7	DOUBLE IT	÷ 4	+ 66	TRIPLE IT	HALVE IT	– 37	+ ¼ OF IT	HALVE IT	ANSWER	
MEDIUM	45	+ 56	TRIPLE IT	– 117	÷ 6	DOUBLE IT	DOUBLE IT	+ ¼ OF IT	÷ 5	+ 93	ANSWER	
HARDER	789	– 427	DOUBLE IT	÷ 4	+ 63	HALVE IT	x 6	DOUBLE IT	÷ 4	– 123	ANSWER	

Polygon

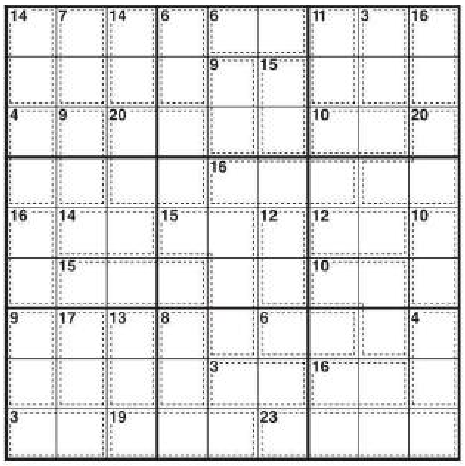


From these letters, make words of **four** or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives. **How you rate** 9 words, average; 13, good; 18, very good; 24, excellent

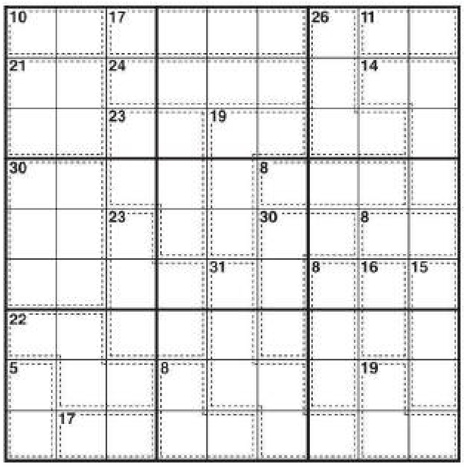
Yesterday's answers

eyot, gene, genet, **genotype**, gent, gone, neep, nope, note, ogee, open, peen, pent, peon, peony, peyote, poet, pogey, pone, pongee, poteen, teen, teeny, tenge, toey, tone, tope, topee, type

Killer Moderate No 10,852



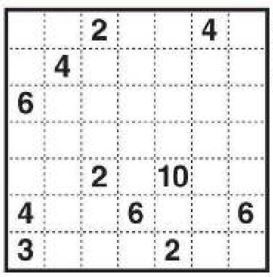
Killer Deadly No 10,853



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Cell Blocks No 5790



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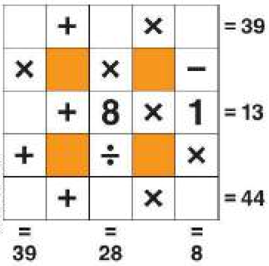
Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

Set Square No 4409



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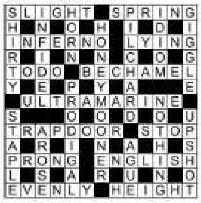
Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

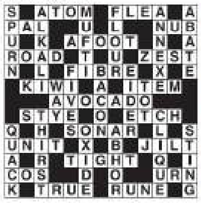
Please note, BODMAS does not apply

Solutions

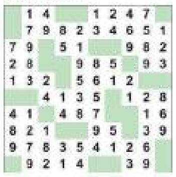
Quick Cryptic 3367



Codeword 5906



Kakuro 4405



Sudoku 16,986

3	1	8	7	5	4	6	9	2
6	4	7	1	9	2	3	5	8
9	5	2	8	3	6	1	4	7
5	8	1	9	6	3	7	2	4
7	9	3	2	4	8	5	1	6
2	6	4	5	7	1	9	8	3
8	3	9	6	2	5	4	7	1
1	7	6	4	8	9	2	3	5
4	2	5	3	1	7	8	6	9

Sudoku 16,987

8	4	1	3	2	5	9	7	6
6	3	2	8	9	7	5	1	4
7	5	9	6	4	1	2	3	8
9	6	4	5	7	3	1	8	2
2	8	3	9	1	6	7	4	5
1	7	5	2	8	4	6	9	3
3	2	7	1	5	8	4	6	9
5	1	8	4	6	9	3	2	7
4	9	6	7	3	2	8	5	1

Sudoku 16,988

6	1	8	7	9	4	5	2	3
9	2	3	8	6	5	1	7	4
5	7	4	2	1	3	9	8	6
7	8	2	4	3	9	6	5	1
3	5	9	6	8	1	2	4	7
1	4	6	5	7	2	3	9	8
4	9	1	3	2	7	8	6	5
2	6	7	1	5	8	4	3	9
8	3	5	9	4	6	7	1	2

Killer 10,850

6	7	9	3	8	5	2	1	4
5	4	3	6	2	1	9	8	7
2	1	8	4	9	7	5	6	3
7	5	1	9	6	8	3	4	2
4	9	2	1	5	3	6	7	8
3	8	6	2	7	4	1	5	9
1	2	5	8	4	9	7	3	6
8	6	7	5	3	2	4	9	1
9	3	4	7	1	6	8	2	5

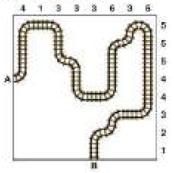
Killer 10,851

8	1	6	3	5	2	7	4	9
2	3	7	8	4	9	5	1	6
5	9	4	1	6	7	8	2	3
1	5	9	6	3	8	2	7	4
7	4	8	2	9	1	6	3	5
3	6	2	4	7	5	1	9	8
9	8	1	5	2	3	4	6	7
4	7	5	9	1	6	3	8	2
6	2	3	7	8	4	9	5	1

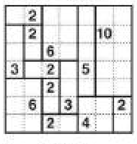
Tetonor 696

66	17	25	22
33 x 2	10 + 7	1 + 24	11 x 2
19	32	35	70
4 + 15	4 x 8	2 + 33	7 x 10
13	36	24	20
11 + 2	18 x 2	1 x 24	18 + 2
23	60	12	42
2 + 21	15 x 4	8 + 4	21 x 2

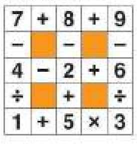
Train Tracks 2931



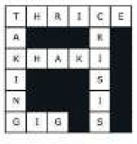
Cell Blocks 5789



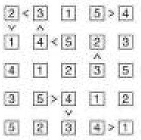
Set Square 4408



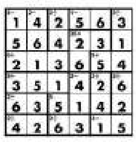
Lexica 9023



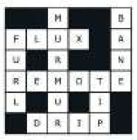
Futoshiki 5446



KenKen 6898



Lexica 9024



Today's solutions

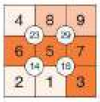
Concise Quintagram

1 Pig
2 Cast
3 Waffle
4 Grappling
5 *Any Old Iron*

Cryptic Quintagram

1 Moon
2 Casino
3 Octopus
4 Thunder
5 Diamonds

Sakuro 4808



Brain Trainer

Easy 65
Medium 124
Harder 243

Word watch

Angklung (c) An Indonesian musical instrument (*Collins*)
Berm (b) A narrow path beside a road (*Chambers*)
Marigenous (c) Produced by the sea (*OED*)

Chess — Winning Move

1 Rd8+! is a neat tidying-up move. After 1 ... Ka7 (the main point is 1 ... Nxd8 2 Bxb7+ winning the black queen) 2 Qe3+ Rb6 (2 ... b6 3 Bxc6 is terminal) and now 3 Nd7 ends all doubt.

Quiz

1 Loch Ness 2 New York City 3 William Shakespeare 4 Two 5 Timothy Dalton 6 Sigmund Freud 7 The Police 8 Peak District 9 Sylvia Plath 10 Sulphur 11 Nebbiolo 12 Diana Athill 13 Konstantin Korovin 14 Mile world record. It refers to running one mile in 222 seconds 15 Shirley Thompson

THE TIMES

31.07.26

MindGames

Word watch
David Parfitt

Angkung

a An accursed piece of jewellery
b An intuition or suspicion
c An Indonesian musical instrument

Berm

a Yeasty froth from fermentation
b A narrow path beside a road
c A pivoted spar attached to a sail

Marigenous

a Pertaining to a spouse
b Spiteful, resentful
c Produced by the sea

Answers on page 15

Sudoku

Mild No 16,989

		5						7
		7			9		4	
		4	7	6			2	
			8	2			6	5
4								9
6	2			9	1			
	7			4	2	6		
	3		6			1		
1						7		

Difficult No 16,990

	8	5		6				
		2		5		7		
3	9				4		8	
				3		2		
			5		7		6	9
	3	7		9				
5			2				1	3
			4			6		5
		1				9		

Fiendish No 16,991

		6					7	
						8		3
5				8	3	4		
				7			9	
		1	5				3	2
		2						1
	2	4						
1			9	2				7
	9			6	1		4	8

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Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

The Times Daily Quiz
Olav Bjortomt

DARREN BELL/GETTY IMAGES

1 The Nessie Hunter is used for boat trips on which Scottish body of water?

2 The Albert Einstein College of Medicine is located in the Bronx in which US city?

3 Bill Bryson's 2007 biography of which playwright is subtitled *The World as Stage*?

4 How many Church of England archbishops sit in the House of Lords?

5 *The Living Daylights* (1987) was the first film to star which Welsh-born actor as James Bond?

6 Which Austrian psychoanalyst completed his last major work, *Moses and Monotheism*, in London in 1939?

7 *Walking on the Moon* (1979) and *Don't Stand So Close To Me* (1980) were No 1 singles for which rock trio?

8 The Derbyshire spa town of Buxton is located on the edge of which national park?

9 Which US poet's radio play in verse, *Three Women*, was broadcast on the BBC in August 1962?

10 Known for their pungent smell, mercaptans contain carbon, hydrogen and which nonmetallic element?

11 The Italian red wine Barolo is made entirely from which grape?

12 *Don't Look at Me Like That* (1967) is the only novel by which British memoirist and editor?

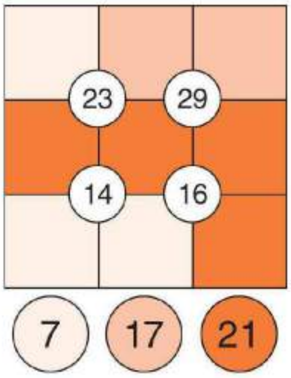
13 Which Russian impressionist painted *Arkhangelsk Port on the Dvina* (1894) and *Paris after Rain* (1900)?

14 Project 222 is the name of Josh Kerr's successful campaign to break which record?

15 Known for the symphony *New Nation Rising*, which British composer is pictured?

Answers on page 15

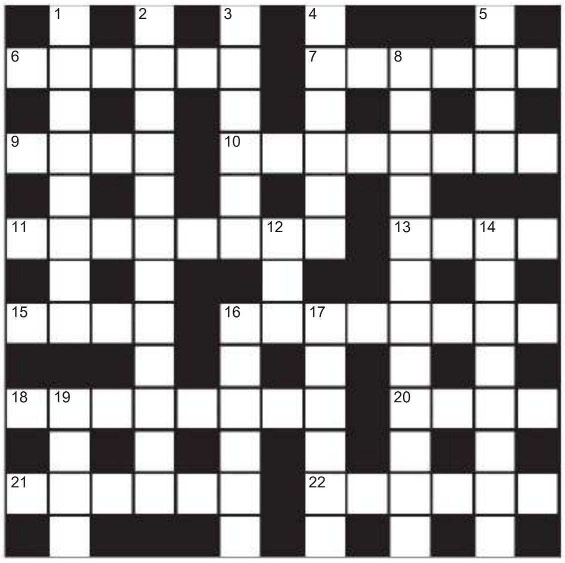
Sakuro No 4808



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

For interactive puzzles visit thetimes.com

The Times Quick Cryptic
No 3368 by Hurley



Across

6 Meeting Irishman before church (6)
7 Mark, 100, ultimately superlative — hard to get (6)
9 Escape group of ships? Not entirely (4)
10 A number sorted tent hire (8)
11 Democrat is eager for changing conflict (8)
13 Urgent order to abandon court (4)
15 Confusion mostly hard to co-ordinate (4)
16 Determined loser coming back, urging tremendous effort initially (8)
18 One opposing aim — nothing right! (8)
20 Twisted evil mask (4)
21 Claim everything, say, aggressive at the end (6)
22 Drink cartel out of order (6)

Down

1 Somewhat before all, I fear for actual human existence (4,4)
2 Fail to meet expectations in car venue: hide abroad (12)
3 One with liability at first demanding extremely broad terms of reference (6)
4 A church feature, high, or long? (6)
5 Ricochet reduced line darts players must stay behind (4)
8 Old-fashioned aunt, idle, vain, unfortunately (12)
12 Envied on regular basis period before festival (3)
14 Store, maybe, source of verbal accounts? (8)
16 To some degree, despicable person, the woman (6)
17 Trim wood (6)
19 Dance sphere (4)

Yesterday's solution on page 15

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Puzzles
Sudoku
Puzzles
Crosswords
Sudokus

THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

THE TIMES

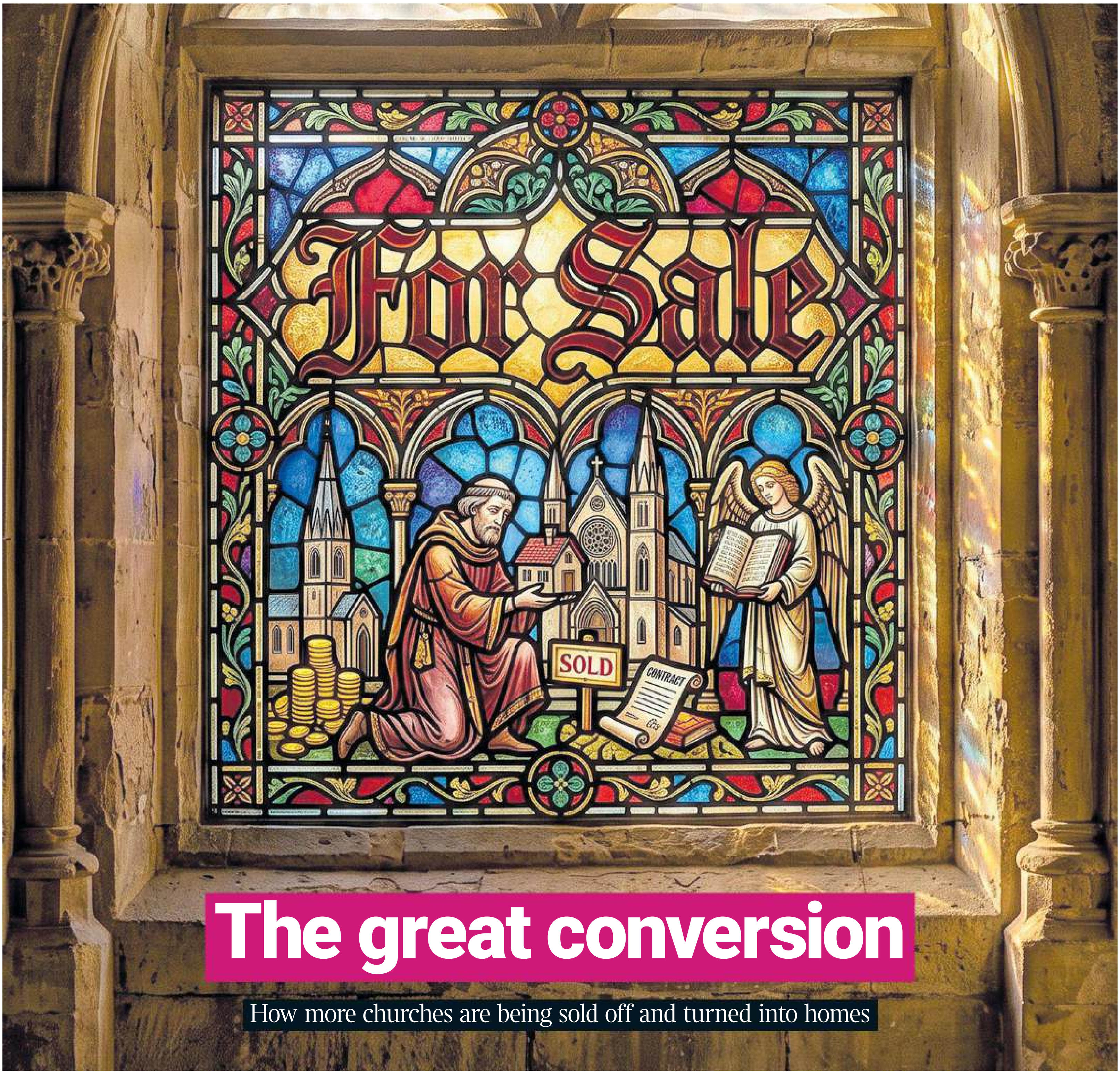
FRIDAY JULY 31 2026

Bricks & Mortar

Inside
Fifty shades of green The best on-trend sofas **Page 7**

Plus
Northern lights Why Londoners are moving to Manchester **Page 8**

Buy. Sell. Move. Improve. Your weekly property guide



The great conversion

How more churches are being sold off and turned into homes

PROPERTY BAROMETER

90%

Single London professionals aged 22-39 cannot afford a newbuild build-to-rent studio at £1,500 per month

Source: JLL

More homes, fewer sales

Buyer hesitancy is stalling the property market

	Total homes for sale	Sales agreed
Northeast	6%	4%
Scotland	-3%	-4%
Yorks & Humber	3%	-7%
Southwest	5%	-8%
London	8%	-8%
Northwest	-3%	-8%
East of England	6%	-11%
Southeast	5%	-11%
West Midlands	4%	-12%
East Midlands	5%	-13%
Wales	-6%	-15%
UK	3%	-9%

4 weeks to July 19, 2026 vs same period a year ago
Source: Zoopla

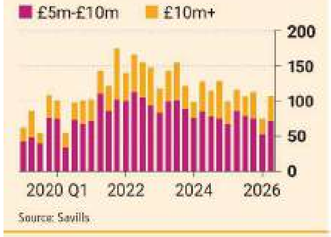
4,000

Customers connected with tradeswomen on the female-only TaskHer app

Source: TaskHer

Super-prime boost

Sales in the £5 million-plus market are being boosted by an influx of American and Gulf buyers



Source: Savills

£2.3 million

Tax refund plus interest that HMRC will have to pay the developer Christian Candy for stamp duty he overpaid in 2012

Source: Upper Tier Tax Tribunal

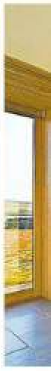
Home help

More than half of those who hand money down to younger generations are helping them buy property

Property purchase	51%
General living support	20%
Education costs	8%
Wedding costs	5%
Debt support	4%
Student loan repayment	2%

*Survey of 2,100 UK adults aged 45 and over
Source: The Private Office

COVER: CREATIVE CONCEPT BY CHARLIE ACORS, IMAGE REALISED BY GEMINI PAGES 2-3: ARTHUR SIMPSON - ESTATE & LETTING AGENTS



God's house to your house

Dwindling congregations and rising repair costs mean more former places of worship are going on the market — but conversion is not always easy. By Malcolm Jack

Constructed in 1870 at the peak of Scottish Presbyterianism, North Roe Kirk is a modest white-harled stone chapel on Shetland with a tiny bellcote that gazes out across the beautiful sheltered bay of Burra Voe. For almost 150 years it faithfully served one of Britain's most northerly congregations, before dwindling attendance eventually persuaded the Church of Scotland, its owners, that it was surplus to requirements. In 2019 the kirk was listed for sale.

The Scottish architect Craig Miller was living in Singapore but in search of a conversion project back in his home country. "The way that it sits on the crest of the hill with incredible views out to sea," he says of North Roe Kirk, "I just kind of fell in love with it from the photos." It wasn't listed, there was no graveyard to complicate matters and the asking price was irresistible. Despite never having visited Shetland, Miller placed a bid and eventually secured the former kirk for just £38,000.

Working with Née Gibson, a local architecture practice, he set about converting the chapel into a two-bedroom blended home-from-home and holiday let. A structural survey revealed extensive wall strengthening and a complete reroofing were required.

The Covid pandemic sent material prices soaring, while labour shortages on the island stretched the schedule. Yet most of the classic church conversion pitfalls — complex planning issues, hidden burials — never materialised and the budget was kept within a reasonable overspill. Completed in 2024, North Roe Kirk has since won an architectural award and stands as a simple and elegant demonstration of how a redundant place of worship can be born again.

"They're sturdy buildings," Miller says of churches. "They've lasted hundreds of years. So why not invest to make them last a couple of centuries more?"

With church congregations dwindling across the UK, and an increasing number of places of worship being declared redundant, could Britain be on the cusp of a new wave of church-to-home conversions like this? Definitely north of the border, where the Church of Scotland is in the midst of a radical programme of disposing of 30 to 40 per cent of its buildings by 2028.

> "Many are changing hands for less than the price of a London parking space

Private residential conversions are emerging as the single most common outcome for those sold, with many changing hands for less than the price of a London parking space. The cost of conversion, however, is always high and can sometimes plunge unprepared — or unlucky — buyers into renovation hell.

Church governing bodies in England and Wales face the same pressures as in Scotland and are disposing of churches too, albeit more slowly, for complex legal and heritage reasons. With the repair bills backlog for Church of England buildings alone said to have reached £1 billion, exacerbated by recent UK government cuts to VAT relief on church repairs, pressure is mounting to quickly find sustainable new futures for many of these cherished buildings — before it becomes too late for some.

In the 1950s about 1.3 million people attended Church of Scotland services on a Sunday. Today it's as few as 60,000. The Rev Scott Rennie, chair of the Church of Scotland's general trustees, says that by resizing a church estate built for a very different Scotland they have "grasped a nettle that really generations before us should have, but didn't have the courage to".

The disposals plan commenced in 2023 and is projected to release about 400 to 450 buildings within its five-year span. So far, 24 churches are listed for sale directly by the Church of Scotland, ranging from a compact rural kirk near Nairn at offers over £35,000 to substantial suburban churches and church complexes for about a quarter of a million pounds each. In 2025 the total number of sales to private residential buyers was 35 per cent, followed by community groups (30 per cent), developers (16 per cent) and other faith groups (9 per cent).

Rennie acknowledges that disposal of churches is always "emotional" for local communities and "not the optimum outcome". "But we simply reached a point where truthfully we did not have

the resources to maintain all these buildings," he says.

Profits from each sale are kept in the local parish. This money has enabled, Rennie says, "the biggest investment programme in the buildings we've retained that there has ever been". Community use — from arts venues to climbing centres and bookshops — is a preferred outcome from sales but the Church has no umbrage with residential conversion "if tastefully and sympathetically done". "There are many, many good examples of church conversions, either in local areas or even in cities," Rennie says.

All churches are not created equal and converting them can range widely in complexity and cost, from a couple of hundred thousand pounds to transform a small rural chapel into a single dwelling, to many millions to modernise and subdivide a large urban church into flats.

Horror stories are never hard to find. In 2025 The Times reported on a Scottish buyer forced to live in a campervan after his 18th-century church conversion spiralled into years of planning disputes over historic bells. Earlier this year a couple in Wales revealed that they had to halt their renovation of a chapel after unexpectedly discovering 83 bodies entombed beneath the floor.

In Wales about a quarter of the country's historic churches and chapels have closed in the past decade. Andrew Morgan, a chartered surveyor at Morgan & Davies who advises the Church in Wales and several other denominations on disposals, says "the estate is certainly being slimmed", albeit "at a lesser pace" than in Scotland. Because the cost of conversion is so steep, prices typically have to be set low. In west Wales in the past two years, five former chapels handled by Morgan & Davies sold for an average of £95,000 each. Planning remains "the hurdle" to disposals happening quicker and more often, Morgan notes, with residential conversions often taking three to five years to complete due to a long slog to obtain consents.

With about 16,000 churches, the Church of England owns one of Europe's largest historic property portfolios. Maintaining it is increasingly burdensome: 976 churches, chapels, meeting houses and cathedrals are listed on Historic England's Heritage at-risk register at present, with between 50 and 60 churches added annually in recent years. Yet, compared with Scotland and Wales, the pipeline of church disposals remains modest.

Since 1969 the Church of England has designated about 2,000 churches redundant, demolishing 503. Among those repurposed, residential conversion is the single most common outcome, accounting for 354 buildings. Commissioners see this as "a good use" as "it tends to be more sustainable and secures the future of the building in all likelihood in perpetuity, whilst also contributing towards providing additional housing".

Yet the process is always very slow. Unlike the Church of Scotland's centrally directed model of governance, the Church of England's parish-based structure leaves decisions about closure rooted in the local congregation. The disposal of every church must navigate the "mission and pastoral measure" — a dense statutory process involving consultation, formal objections, a search for alternative uses, planning permission, restrictive covenants and, often, delicate negotiations over churchyards and burials. About three quarters of Church of England churches are listed buildings, adding further complexity.

"Overall, the system does work," says Adrian Browning of the Church commissioners' closed churches team, "but the nature of the buildings that come forward being listed and the need for consents from various parties means it can take time."

It can cause frustration for some. Sam Pratley is the diocesan secretary and chief executive of the Diocese of Hereford, a largely rural area with 406 churches in all — roughly one for every 800 residents. Of the 15 churches to become redundant there within the past decade, until last year none had successfully found a new use. The problem, Pratley says, is not a lack of willing buyers but a system that too often defeats them.

One 12th-century church in the hamlet of Wolferlow has stood empty for almost 20 years after successive residential conversion schemes foundered amid planning hurdles, heritage restrictions and local objections, including those of a neighbouring farmer whose young son's grave lies in the grounds. "The developers are there," Pratley says. "We're quite happy to give people those buildings and the opportunity to change them into a new use."

But with such high demands placed on them, would-be buyers tend to reach the same conclusion, he says: "Too costly, too difficult. We don't want it."

Simon Linford is a vicar's son and lifelong church bellringer who became a building contractor. He is now establishing a business dedicated solely to church conversions, because he reckons what we have seen so far is just "the tip of the iceberg". The pace of disposal and repurposing of churches in England he thinks "is going to accelerate really highly" in future, and "it's going to become quite a difficult problem to solve."

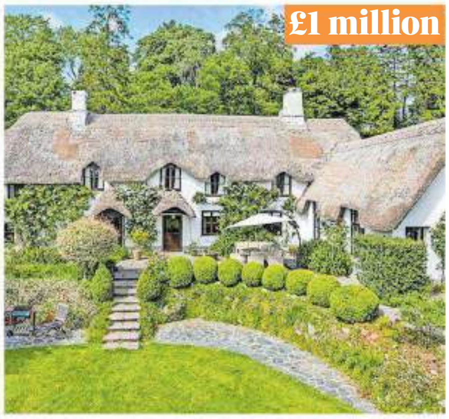
Linford argues that if England is serious about preserving churches as landmarks of its built environment, the closure process needs to be streamlined and conservation attitudes towards adaptation made more pragmatic, so that more buildings can be converted to residential use before they decay beyond rescue. "Lots and lots of people would love to turn a church into their home," Linford says. "They've seen it on *Grand Designs*. These buildings are full of character. But it's quite difficult."

He believes more specialist help is needed to guide buyers through abundant church conversion challenges, from the mundane to the macabre. "I've dealt with moving graves," Linford says. "I'm dealing with changing a stained-glass window or two, I'm dealing with burying a waste treatment plant in a cemetery. I'm dealing with all the stuff which your normal person wouldn't have a prayer of doing."

Above and left: North Roe Kirk on Shetland. Below left: a church conversion in Maida Vale, northwest London, is on sale for £550,000 with Marsh & Parsons

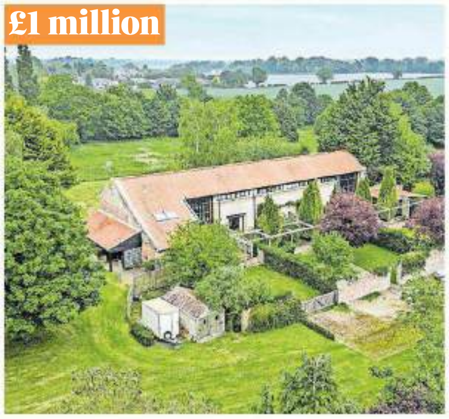
What £1 million buys you in …

Devon



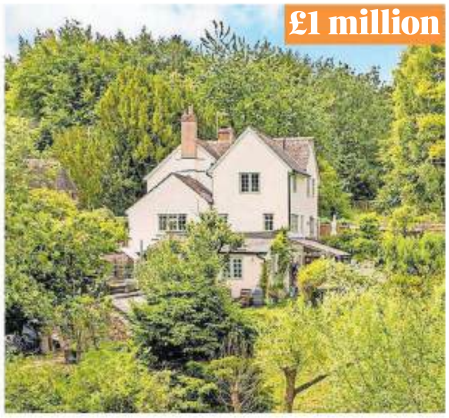
Kerswell Springs is a Devon longhouse with whitewashed stone walls, a thatched roof and eyebrow dormers. Within its two acres of grounds are a swimming pond filled naturally from a spring, a summerhouse, an apple orchard and formal gardens. The house has three reception rooms, four bedrooms, two bathrooms and a gym and snug. The property is near the small town of Chudleigh and about four miles from Dartmoor National Park. Exeter is nine miles away.
EPC E (potential C) — on a scale of A (best) to G (worst)
Upside Double garage.
Downside Oil-fired heating.
Contact jackson-stops.co.uk

Norfolk



This 2.5-acre estate in the village of Beachamwell, near the market town of Swaffham, spans more than 5,000 sq ft of living space, with ten bedrooms. The main four-bedroom barn conversion has vaulted, beam-filled rooms with garden views. The surrounding grounds include four independent cottages. There is a Mediterranean-inspired south-facing walled garden and private outbuildings with a store, workshop and two garages.
EPC E (potential D)
Upside Ideal for multigenerational living or a holiday let business.
Downside Parts of the estate have to remain accessible for the maintenance of electrical services.
Contact sowerbys.com

Wiltshire



This four-bedroom home in Bishopstone, seven miles from Swindon, was formerly the village courthouse. In an elevated spot on the North Wessex Downs, the 2,246 sq ft property is spread over three floors and has a light-filled open-plan kitchen, dual-aspect dining room and a guest suite on the lower ground floor. Outside, tiered mature gardens meander down to a chalk stream, framed by views over the village rooftops. There is useful storage and a greenhouse. Bishopstone is a charming village with a church, a pub and a primary school.
EPC E (potential C)
Upside Idyllic village setting.
Downside Septic tank drainage required.
Contact carterjonas.co.uk

Or… your own grouse moor

For the romantic property investor. In the Yorkshire Dales National Park, this 678-acre moor offers white hill and heather, bog and peat, and an abundance of game: red grouse, red-legged partridge and pheasant. It forms part of a driven shoot in collaboration with a neighbouring estate, and the owner has a number of days of walked-up shooting every year. It's ten miles from Skipton.
EPC N/A
Upside For the bleak poet in all of us.
Downside You'd better enjoy being battered by wind and rain.
Contact gscgrays.co.uk

We moved from Derbyshire to build a retreat in Cyprus

Donna Curley is living her wellness dream among olive trees on the Mediterranean island

My husband, Nick, has always worked away from home but when he semi-retired we decided we wanted a new life together in Cyprus [*says Donna Curley, 49*].

We had been living in Derbyshire, where I grew up. I left home at 18 and met my first husband a year later. After we separated I spent a few months travelling around Australia and then I was ready for a fresh start.

I became a fitness instructor and met Nick, 56, who was deployed in Afghanistan as an army reservist. He had been born on the RAF base at Akrotiri to British parents.

After working at David Lloyd fitness club in Derby and while working as a Weight Watchers coach for 16 years, I lost 7½ stone. I also ran several classes at my local leisure centre teaching yoga, spinning, Pilates and circuit training.

When the pandemic hit, I had to take my teaching online and that is how things stayed — although I had never dreamt I could get paid for doing Zoom classes.

I'd never been to Cyprus until meeting Nick but in 2013 we bought a one-bedroom holiday home in Kapparis, on the southeastern tip of the island. Visiting two or three times a year, I fell in love with the slow pace of the island, its tranquillity and beautiful sandy beaches.

As the years went by, we talked about moving there but waited until Nick's two children — from his first marriage — were well into their twenties. Our dream was to open a wellness retreat, putting into practice all that I have learnt and using Nick's project management skills.

We eventually found a property with bags of potential and land in the countryside in 2024, after selling our holiday apartment. It's in Avgorou, a large farming "red soil" village 25 minutes from Ayia Napa.

Our house is a two-bedroom bungalow on around 3,000 square metres of land with a swimming pool and 20 olive trees. We immediately began to build timber pods — imported as kits from Lithuania — to house our guests. They sleep two to three people, and have en suite bathrooms.

We sold our home in Holbrook in Derbyshire and moved out a year ago. Because we owned a home on the island before Brexit, we were able to get a five-year residency permit, which allows me to live and work on the island. The paperwork in Cyprus can be slow and laborious, so I paid an expert to help me with it. It was money well spent.

Donna Curley with her husband, Nick, and their bungalow in Cyprus

Everything moves slowly in Cyprus — not a bad environment for a wellness retreat once it is complete. We've had to adjust our time frame and Nick's taken on part-time consultancy work for the Ministry of Defence so we don't struggle for income, and I do my online classes.

Our plan is to offer five-day wellness retreats and B&B stays. After road-testing it with friends and family, I just had my first fitness client staying for a two-week programme, and we worked out every day together. Since a drone hit a hangar at Akrotiri base in March [as part of the Iran war] it's been tough for those running tourism businesses.

The cost of living is lower than the UK, though food is expensive. We live off-grid with solar power and our own well so we have no utility bills. But it gets cold in winter so while the wood-burner gets a lot of use, we need a back-up generator for those rare grey days.

A lot of the expats here have well-established friendship groups so it's harder to make new friends than I thought, though there are a lot of British people moving out here now for the tax benefits as well as the lifestyle.

I also got diagnosed with scoliosis last year and while it can be debilitating, yoga really helps. The Cypriot national healthcare system is good.

Our move to Cyprus was designed so we could spend more time together, which has happened but not quite as much as we hoped — yet. I think with any big move you have to adapt and accept that there might be a few hurdles, along with the Greek *"siga siga"* [slowly slowly]. I am glad that we took the leap.

Interview by Liz Rowlinson

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HEMINGFORD GREY CAMBRIDGESHIRE
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EPC Exempt | Council Tax: H | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 0330 333 1060 £2,000,000

CHICHESTER WEST SUSSEX
One of Chichester's most distinguished addresses — an award winning Grade II Listed 15th century townhouse, fully refurbished and reimagined.
EPC: C | Council Tax: H | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01243 908077 £1,850,000

SOUTHPORT MERSEYSIDE
A luxury family home finished to an exceptional standard, featuring a spa-inspired leisure suite and magnificent entertaining spaces.
EPC: C | Council Tax: F | Tenure: Freehold *offers over*
Contact: 01704 205021 £1,600,000

GREAT HORMEAD HERTFORDSHIRE
A stunning four bedroom detached home set within a plot of approximately 1.5 acres, with a detached barn and beautiful landscaped gardens.
EPC: D | Council Tax: G | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01920 443898 £1,500,000

BRANDON SUFFOLK
An outstanding detached seven bedroom home set in 3.5 acres of formal gardens and woodland, with indoor leisure facilities including a pool, entertainment room and bar.
EPC: D | Council Tax: H | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01284 718822 £1,500,000

NEWBURY BERKSHIRE
Malt Cottage is a spacious four bedroom, two bathroom, three reception, Grade II Listed 18th century property with a wealth of character.
EPC: E | Council Tax: G | Tenure: Freehold *OIEO*
Contact: 01635 30303 £1,100,000

FURNESS VALE DERBYSHIRE
Yeardsley Hall is a Grade II Listed masterpiece in High Peak, offering 1.09 acres, three bedrooms, four bathrooms, two reception rooms and no onward chain.
EPC: D | Council Tax: G | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01298 808082 £995,000

CROWLAND LINCOLNSHIRE
Exceptional Georgian-style country home in a rural setting offering 3 acres, four bedrooms, ancillary accommodation, stables, triple garage and fenland views.
EPC: B | Council Tax: F | Tenure: Freehold *offers over*
Contact: 01780 750200 £900,000

STAINFORTH NORTH YORKSHIRE
Unique Grade II Listed 17th century farmhouse with four bedrooms, a one bedroom annexe, a barn and a generous garden, offering period charm and remarkable potential.
EPC: E | Council Tax: F | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01200 420747 £795,000

SAUL GLOUCESTER
Spacious village home with four double bedrooms, a bespoke farmhouse kitchen, versatile living spaces, mature gardens, eco-friendly features and excellent transport links.
EPC: C | Council Tax: G | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01453 751661 £740,000

WEST DRAYTON MIDDLESEX
Distinctive Grade II Listed residence occupying a prominent position overlooking the historic green in West Drayton.
EPC: D | Council Tax: D | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 0203 912 3425 £725,000

MYTHOLMROYD WEST YORKSHIRE
A substantial Grade II Listed family home combining period character with elegant modern living, set within an exclusive cobbled courtyard overlooking the Calder Valley.
EPC Exempt | Council Tax: F | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01422 410723 £695,000

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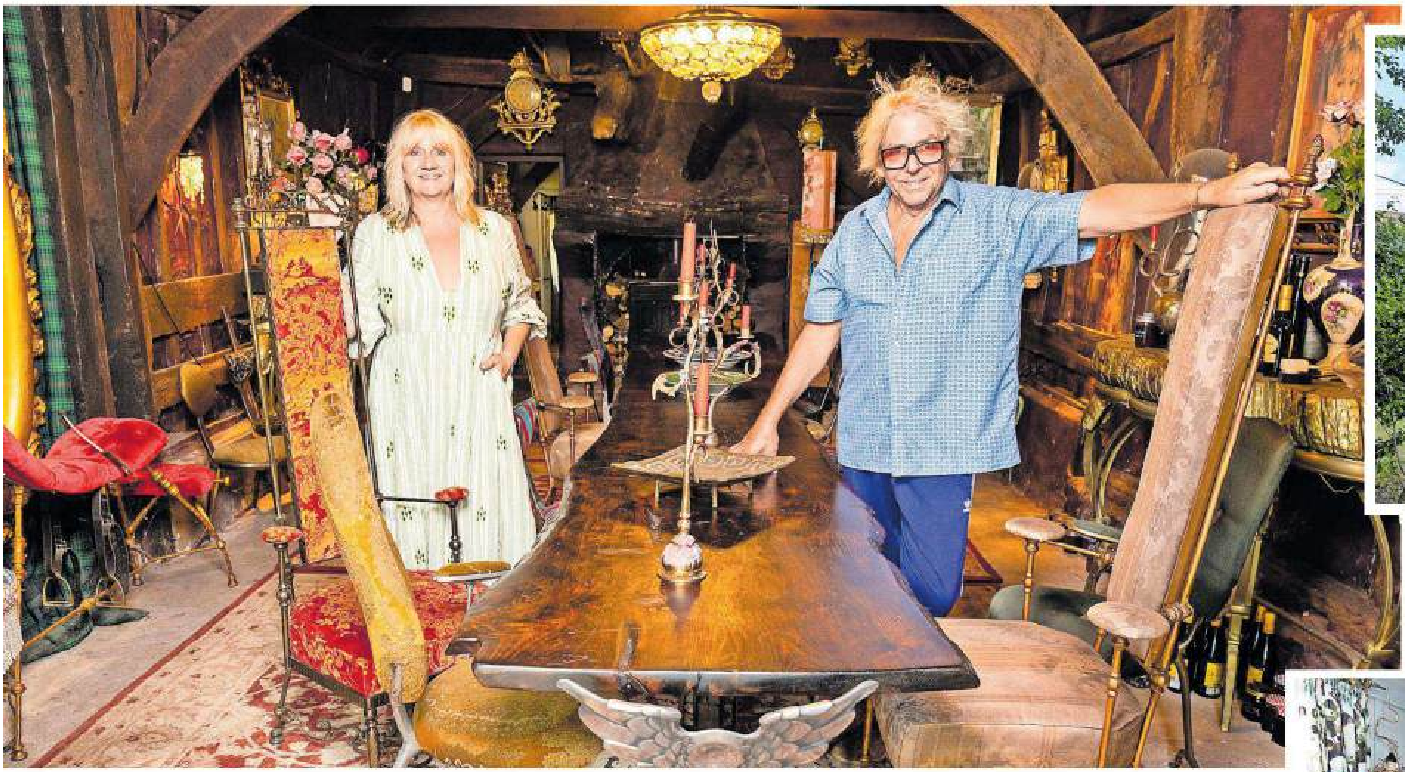

Mark Brazier-Jones and his wife, Julia, at their home near Royston, Hertfordshire, which is on sale for £950,000

The art of salvage

The eccentric designer Mark Brazier-Jones is selling his home and all its contents — though Bram Stoker's desk is not up for grabs. By Sasha Nugara

To step into the home of Mark Brazier-Jones and his wife, Julia, is to abandon the modern rules of sterile interior design. Mark helped to birth the creative salvage movement in the 1980s alongside Tom Dixon and Ron Arad, championing the use of scrap materials to produce beautiful, anarchic furniture — and his house and its decor reflect just that.

"I like decay and dereliction," Mark says, "and I like antiques that are worn and show their age and show use, and I kind of like to bring that into my work as well. People are very preoccupied with perfection. And I find that annoying, to be honest."

When they moved in, in 2009, the 16th-century home near Royston, Hertfordshire, had been dressed in a Seventies style, with peach moiré silk, linoleum floors and short little box curtains. The Brazier-Joneses wanted to return to a more suitable period style. "It's a 450-year-old house so it just seemed incongruous to have it slightly Seventies/Eighties style, so we took it back [to the period] to make it look more in keeping," Julia says. "We put panelling up. We put wooden floors down."

"It's an old house but it didn't look old enough and so we set-dressed it to look nice and old the way we like things," Mark says. "But it's not crumbling away, that's the trick."

Mark and Julia met when she was running a gallery that was exhibiting his work. Their mutual passion for art is apparent in their home, which is 90 per cent furnished with Mark's work. "I'm very lucky because I can say, 'Oh, we need a dining table. I can't find anything. Can you make me something? I need a new bed, I need a dressing table, I need this,'" Julia says, laughing.

After 17 years in the same house, they are moving on — but the couple are willing to sell every Brazier-Jones piece within the house if the price is right.

"There's only one piece that we probably wouldn't sell because nobody would offer us enough money," Julia says. "That is the desk that Bram Stoker wrote *Dracula* on that Mark has transformed into something magnificent."

Stoker desk aside, how much would the buyer need to offer for the rest? "Quite a lot. That chandelier we just showed you sells for $120,000 [£90,000]," Julia says. "Some of Mark's work has sold at auction for ridiculous amounts of money. I mean, there was a chandelier that sold for £92,500. It wasn't a one-of-a-kind piece, it was a chandelier that we make to order, and we only sell it for £48,000."

> How much would the buyer need to offer? 'Quite a lot. That chandelier over there sells for £90,000'

Bram Stoker's writing desk won't be staying with the house

Anything that is not a Mark Brazier-Jones is probably an antique that caught their eye or bric-a-brac from a car boot sale. "We're not minimalists," Mark says. "I like detailed narrative, texture."

He is mainly known for his sculptural designs, such as the wingback chair made of bronze, and for his use of other metals in ornamental, experimental forms. Having started welding industrial scraps, his work has since evolved, catching the eye of Madonna, Mick Jagger and Karl Lagerfeld, who all own bits of Brazier-Jones.

Mark is not fazed by the clientele. Celebrities are not art critics, he says, but reflects on one of his more exciting customers in Los Angeles: "This limousine pulled up outside of the shop with darkened windows and the window came down a little bit.

"The chauffeur came out and went into the shop, and says, 'That chair in the window — can I take it out on the sidewalk and show my boss?' He took the chair out, gave it a spin and the limousine drove off. Half an hour later somebody turned up with a cheque. It was from Prince."

Mark started designing for the house as soon as the offer had been accepted. One of the main draws to the property was a large 9m by 4.5m room to the side of the house, which was being used to store garden equipment.

"We sneakily looked at each other. We knew exactly what we were going to do," Mark says. "And so we transformed it into this baroque dining hall. And it's perfect."

They were moving on December 9, with a new year's party planned, so Julia told Mark they needed a table. He found a single piece of wood sliced from a cedar of Lebanon. "It's an amazing piece of wood. We were very lucky to chance upon it at a reclamation yard."

It became the foundation of their 4m-long table, capable of sitting 19 diners, with an assortment of Brazier-Jones chairs surrounding it. Parties were always a priority for the couple, so the party space was a must, and the table needed to take some weight.

"You can get up on top [of the table] and do sword fights as well," he says.

"There's been no accidents," Julia adds by way of reassurance. "I've had burlesque girls do dubious things on it before."

The room also has several Brazier-Jones chandeliers, with lighting having become a focus for his work. "There's so much work to be done in lighting," Mark says, "so I just got into it."

They have designed their entire home to be enjoyed most at night, after dark.

"It's all about ambience," he says. "I look at modern lighting and I think, somebody's done that on a drawing board but how do you live with it? Is it going to be a glaring thing in the corner of your eye? Can you see the light source? Is it going to flatter skin tones?"

"I think a lot of people leave lighting to the last minute, which is always a

CHRIS RADBURN FOR THE SUNDAY TIMES

mistake," Julia says. "People always use very harsh white-coloured lightbulbs, which is incredibly unflattering to skin tone, faces, [under-eye] bags and wrinkles. They can also bring about a feeling of depression because it's all too harsh and too white."

Another key to a home looking its best after sunset? No white paint anywhere. They choose gloomy colours, even on the ceilings, because the bones of the house (low ceilings, low windows, deep walls) do not let in masses of light.

"If you want to create light [in an old house], painting it white is not really going to do anything, it's just going to make it look soulless, so we chose colours that make you focus your eye on looking through the window. It also doesn't show the dirt, which is lovely."

The forest of 60 trees they've planted on their half-acre plot has also added to their cosy, reclusive lifestyle. When they moved in, they removed the topiary, box hedges and lawn, and got planting, yearning for the feeling of wilderness.

"It's very much a forest garden," Julia says. "You can walk around and eat pretty much everything apart from the digitalis." There are apricots, figs and quince.

"The garden can run itself. It's a natural forest," Mark says.

And it was their garden that brought on the realisation that it was time to move on from their farmhouse, which is on sale with Cheffins for £950,000. Their mission to create the perfect home was done. "Perfect for us, not necessarily perfect for others," Julia says.

Get your greens: why it's all about sofas in moss, ivy and sage

Grey is no longer king of the living room. Katrina Burroughs chooses her favourite seats in the on-trend shade

Where have all the grey sofas gone? Haring around the autumn/winter shows this month, I have barely seen a settee in what used to be the default hue. Green has taken over as the couch colour of choice — and what an improvement it is.

Jason Wilary-Attew, the director of home at John Lewis, says: "We have seen a clear shift in sofa colour preferences. Where grey once dominated, green has now taken over quite convincingly." In the past year at John Lewis grey sofas dropped to 9 per cent of sales, while green ones rose to 17 per cent. "We predict this will rise even further this year," Wilary-Attew says.

At Barker and Stonehouse green sofas are outselling greys by a bigger margin than at John Lewis. The retailer sold five times as many green sofas as grey between January and June this year and sales of green sofas have been up by 80 per cent year-on-year. The trend continues to gain momentum: online searches for green sofas have been 60 per cent higher than searches for grey sofas over the past month.

Green is the bestselling colour for some of the most popular Furniture Village sofas. Fifty-six per cent of Bronwyns (a bestselling model that is reduced from £1,795 to £1,595) and 56 per cent of Eclipses were sold in green between November 2025 and June 2026.

Searches for "green sofa" on habitat.co.uk increased by 10 per cent between March 2 and July 26 this year compared with the same period last year. Moss and olive green shades performed especially well for the brand. The Myra three-seater in moss green upholstery (£595) sold out within weeks of launching in spring.

To cut a (chaise) longue story short, there's an industry-wide excitement about green — from sage to ivy — but the most sought-after shades are moss and olive: warm, earthy greens with a minuscule hint of yellow. John Lewis's bestselling upholstery fabric is a moss green chenille. Heal's reports that green sofas outsell grey and that there is a particular passion for mossy colours. In direct response to a growing demand for green colourways, the company has introduced a myrtle shade of its smart cotton linen fabric and an olive of its wool velvet.

"What's interesting is that people don't necessarily see green as a bold choice any more. It acts almost like a modern neutral," says Swyft's design director, John O'Leary, whose vine colourway has been a hit with buyers. "It's grounding, versatile and brings warmth and personality to a room without overwhelming the space."

He's right. That is the genius of green. It is a crossover colour that is equally at home in classic and contemporary interiors, works beautifully alongside natural colours and materials, and brings personality without dominating the room. It is quite simply restful. And timeless. This is not a one-season wonder.

Home improvers voting with their cash have driven the glut of green sofas that is about to land in store and online. The rise of the green sofa is democratic design in action.

"Due to the uptick in sales and what we were seeing trending in home decor, we expanded our range of greens last year," says Hannah Rosman, the commercial director at Willow & Hall. She has sold twice as many designs in green fabrics than in grey in the past year. "We've seen a rise in the lighter greens, especially for our older demographic, while the darker colours always do well for family households as they're more forgiving."

If you fancy a green sofa but haven't yet invested, this month may actually be the time to buy. Spending on a couch in a heatwave feels wrong — and for precisely that reason you may bag a bargain right now.

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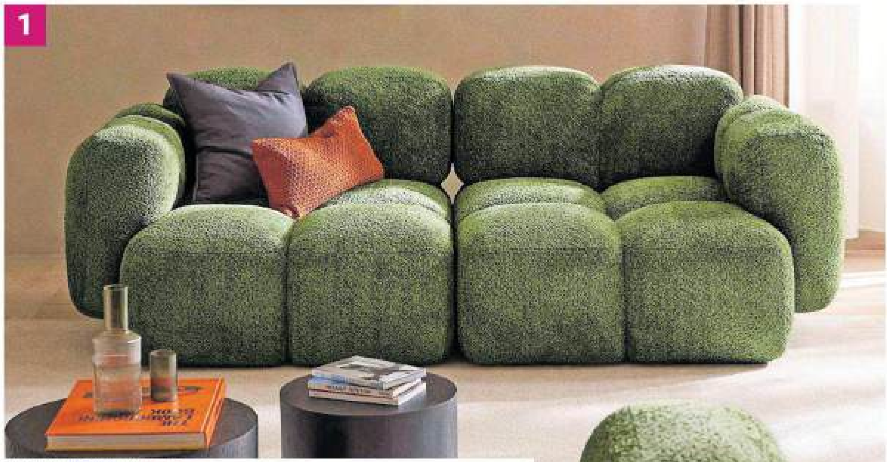

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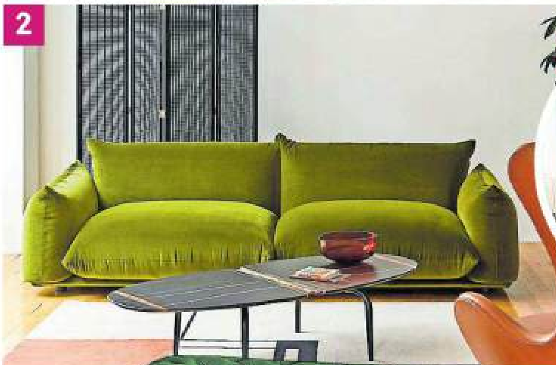

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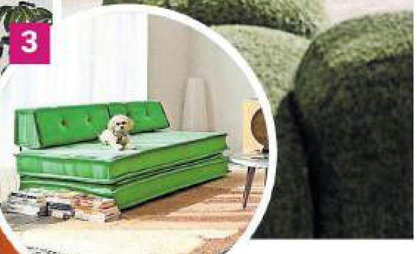

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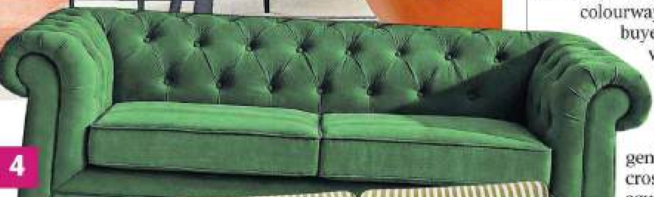

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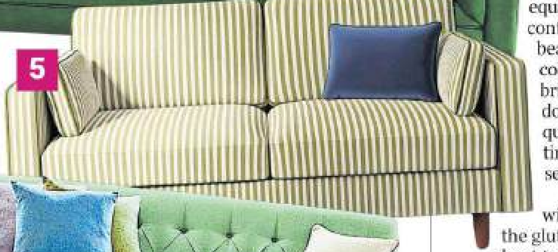

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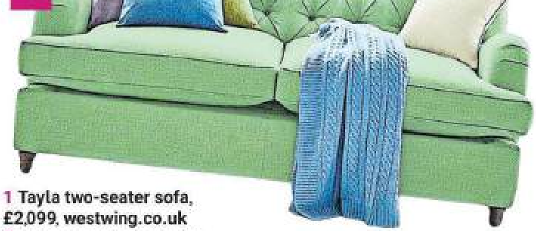

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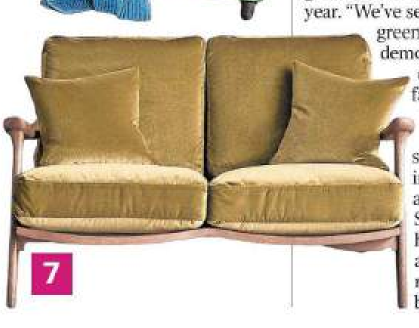


1 Tayla two-seater sofa, £2,099, westwing.co.uk
2 Marenco two-seater by Arflex, £7,256, aram.co.uk
3 Macy double sofabed, reduced to £599, urbanoutfitters.com
4 Green velvet chesterfield, £695, habitat.co.uk
5 Zoe Linford stripe three-seater sofabed, reduced to £649, dunelm.com
6 Foxcote sofabed, reduced to £1,670, willowandhall.co.uk
7 Squishbag velvet small sofa, £1,895, loaf.com

Northern powerhouse

No 10 North movers will be spoilt for choice in Manchester — and buying and renting will be cheaper than in London too, says Jayne Dowle

Andy Burnham's choice of Heron House to set up an interim headquarters for No 10 North is certainly trailblazing but his team are only the latest London émigrés to the mighty northern metropolis of Manchester.

"Buyers from London are already our biggest line of inquiry," says Louis Twist-Green, sales consultant at the city centre estate agency Julie Twist Properties. "They were non-existent five to ten years ago but they're moving up north to improve their quality of life. The cost of living factor? It's like the difference between night and day."

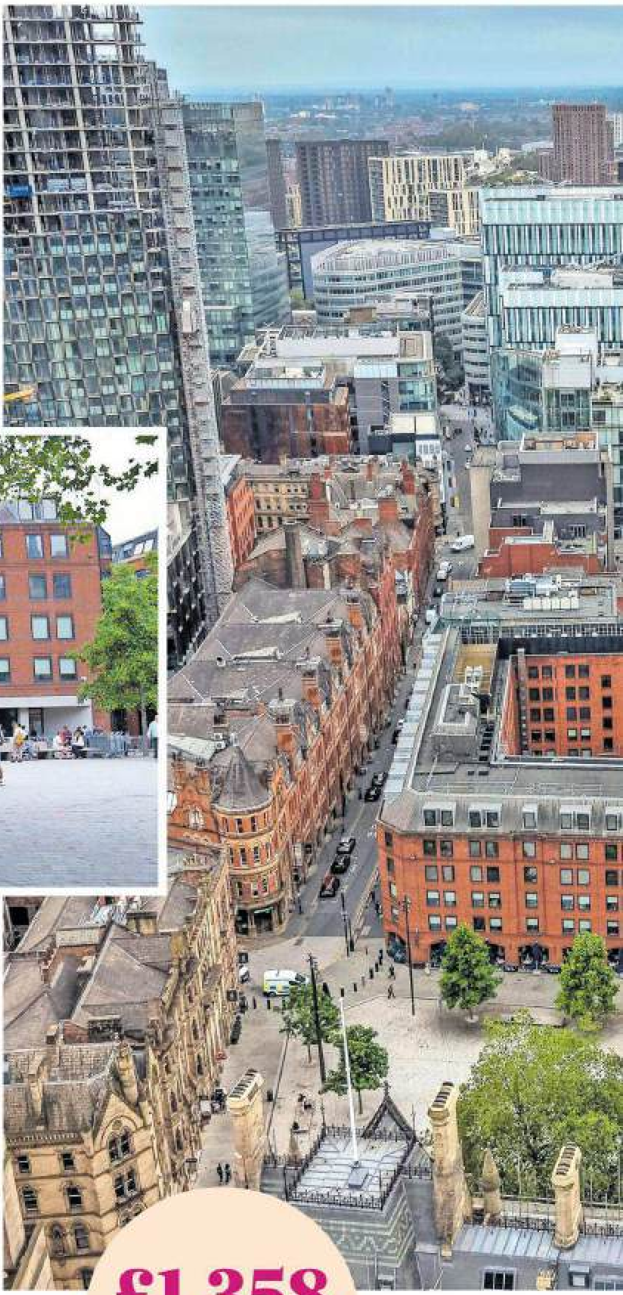
Twist-Green is also seeing a trend of families buying apartments for children coming to Manchester to study at the University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University, the University of Salford or one of the city's other higher education institutions. These include the football-focused University Academy 92, co-founded by members of Manchester United's Class of '92 — Gary Neville, Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes, Phil Neville and Nicky Butt — and the Royal Northern College of Music.

Such buyers will need a budget of about £210,000 to £230,000 for a two-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment, perhaps with a parking space — despite all those Bee Network buses buzzing around — and £320,000 to £350,000 for a more premium city centre property, Twist-Green says.

Lee Butterley, 46, moved to Manchester from Kensal Rise in northwest London last year, to a £370,000 shared ownership 15th-floor two-bedroom apartment at Latimer's Islington Wharf development, buying a 45 per cent share. He is able to increase his increment by 1 per cent each year and hopes to eventually reach 50 per cent ownership.

Born in Doncaster, South Yorkshire, and having grown up in Weymouth, Dorset, the BBC media planner moved to London when he was 22. "I had previously done short stints in Manchester with work and developed a bit of a taste for it," he says. "I made friends, other friends moved up here. I came to really like it and thought it was the place for me to live in future. This location is great, slap-bang in the middle of town, the gym, the barbers, a Sainsbury's downstairs — everything is a five-minute journey.

"In London I would spend so much time shlepping up and down on the Bakerloo Line. It was a barrier, you had to think in advance about what you were doing. Now friends will ring or message and say, 'I'm just walking by your flat, shall I pop in for a wine?' It's a lot freer and easier than London." Manchester city centre often surprises newcomers because, at about two square miles, it's quite compact. "People aren't quite as caught up in locations as they are in London," Twist-Green adds. "Popular areas are always Deansgate, Spinningfields, Castlefield and Ancoats, and Piccadilly for the proximity to the [railway] station. Hulme is quite popular too — we have a lot of students there."



From left: the No 10 North headquarters at Heron House; Manchester city centre with Heron House; Andy Burnham and his cabinet at No 10 North

> Buyers from London are already our biggest line of inquiry. They were non-existent five to ten years ago

No 10 North employees seeking digs a short stroll or cycle from Heron House might look around the historic, pub-dotted Portland Street, Twist-Green advises, or The Edge, a mile and a half across the River Irwell in Salford, an apartment development where the fashion designer Ben de Lisi did the interiors. There's also Leftbank in Spinningfields and Century Buildings, built between 1905 and 1909 as the home of the National Boiler & Generator Insurance Company.

And under construction just around the corner are the 217 branded residences at St Michael's, a £400 million mixed-use development led by Gary Neville's Relentless Developments. Price tags, reported to be from £800,000, are suitably Premier League footballerish.

Renting or buying costs vary hugely across the city. However, the average monthly private rent in Manchester was £1,358 in June 2026, an increase of 3.5 per cent from £1,312 in June 2025, against a northwest average of £961, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This is about a thousand pounds cheaper a month than London, at £2,302.

"One of the biggest surprises was just how much further your money goes in Manchester," says Katie Whelan, 29, a content creator for the Manchester-based regeneration-focused property developers Capital & Centric. She moved here in January. "I was paying over £900 a month for a double room in a shared house in north London with three housemates, plus bills, and I was amazed to see that for a similar monthly cost you could rent a one-bedroom studio in Manchester, often with extras like a balcony. It really opened my eyes to the difference in affordability up here in the north."

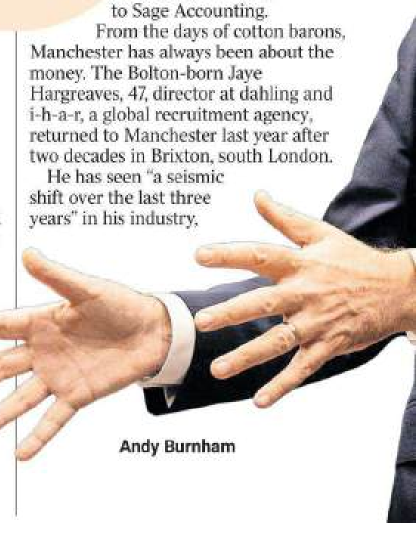
£1,358

Average monthly private rent in Manchester

Meanwhile, as salaries in Manchester rise, affordability becomes easier. The median full-time annual salary for Manchester residents is now £36,278 per year (ONS), not far behind London, where the median salary is now £39,778, according to Sage Accounting.

From the days of cotton barons, Manchester has always been about the money. The Bolton-born Jaye Hargreaves, 47, director at dahling and i-h-a-r, a global recruitment agency, returned to Manchester last year after two decades in Brixton, south London.

He has seen "a seismic shift over the last three years" in his industry,



Andy Burnham

CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/AFP/GETYY IMAGES;XINHUA /ALAMY LIVE NEWS

£36,278

Median full-time annual salary for Manchester residents

£400m

Price of St Michael's, a development led by Gary Neville's Relentless company

which he says is moving from being "very London-centric" to northern cities, including Manchester, Wakefield and Leeds. This has been spearheaded by broadcasters, including the BBC and Channel 4, moving creative aspects of their operations to the north of England. Hargreaves, who lives in Bolton and has offices in Bonded Warehouse Manchester, once a railway goods terminal, mentions team members from Cambridge and Stratford-upon-Avon. "I'm the most northern person in the building," he says.

In the last decade or so Manchester has evolved to become a cosmopolitan, culture-loving city akin to Copenhagen or Amsterdam, says Mike Ingall, chief executive of the developers Allied London, who lives in Richmond, southwest London, but has worked in the city for 30 years.

His company's developments include the office/retail/leisure scheme Nol Spinningfields; St John's; Aviva Studios, home of Factory International and currently hosting Ai Weiwei's *Button Up!* exhibition; and Campfield, a tech, media and creative campus in the former Campfield market halls.

"I have an apartment in the city centre but the other week I brought the whole family up and I took an apartment at Soho House [which opened in November 2025]. I honestly thought I was somewhere like Copenhagen or Amsterdam," Ingalls says. "The whole of the city seemed to have this continental feel about it. I was spending my weekend doing things that you perhaps wouldn't expect to do in Manchester. We went to a production at Aviva Studios — it was very contemporary, very cultured. Then there was the choice of restaurants where we went for lunch and dinner: 20 Stories, Fenix, the Ivy, Soho House itself for brunch. I was in that city and I actually felt European."

Like any city, Manchester has its challenging areas. Cheetham Hill, Burnage and Levenshulme were all named as hotspots for "dodgy shops" selling the likes of illicit vapes and American sweets and acting as fronts for organised crimes, according to a recent Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) survey.

However, there are plenty of suburbs outside the city centre where families — relocating from London or otherwise — can find a safe berth. Perennial favourites include Didsbury (a Sunday Times Best Place to Live 2026), Chorlton-cum-Hardy in south Manchester, and Prestwich (a Sunday Times Best Place to Live 2024) to the north of the city centre, all handy for Heron House via direct Metrolink tram links to the nearest station, St Peter's Square, taking no more than 40 minutes.

"Didsbury is the jewel in the Mancunian crown and was the 'go-to' location when the BBC relocated to Salford over ten years ago," says Rob Kennedy, managing director at the local estate agents Philip James Kennedy.

The suburb is popular with city centre tenants and buyers wanting to move out to start families and enjoy a more relaxed lifestyle. "We have early Victorian cottages, late Victorian/Edwardian terraces and semis through to Arts and Crafts detached family homes, futuristic apartment and townhouse developments," Kennedy adds. "But there is still considerable bias towards the north, with many southerners still believing that Mancunians live in two-bedroomed terraces with no hallway, like in *Coronation Street*."

Back at Heron House, against the glittering skyscrapers of Deansgate, the mill and warehouse conversions bristling with young creatives and yet more émigrés following the trail north, that bias is about to blown out of the water.

Rental Health

Sasha Nugara, Property Reporter

My housemate's constant swearing is ruining our friendship

From dodgy landlords to housemate dramas, our columnist answers your questions

Q My living situation is perfect — but there's one thing that's ruining it. I love my space, and I'm living with likeminded people in a location I enjoy. But I can't stand one of my housemates swearing.

They're a gamer and spend a lot of their time in the bedroom, swearing at the top of their lungs, saying really horrible things. I don't even mind the noise or shouting, it's the bad language that upsets me.

Even outside of gaming, it feels like every other word they say is a swear word. Swearing is not something I was brought up with and this has made me realise how uncomfortable it makes me. I don't want this to ruin the friendship we have formed but it's really upsetting me. What can I do?

A Now I must admit, I do enjoy an occasional swear word, but it's important to tailor your language according to those around you. For example, I try not to swear in front of my grandparents, in a professional setting or when around children. I do, however, swear in front of my mum and friends (and occasionally aim it directly at my brother).

Still, I've noticed how divisive swearing can be and it comes down to how often you've been exposed to it. My first job was in a pizza takeaway, an environment full of yells and curses.

However, dropping the odd f-bomb for hyperbole is very different from constantly raging at your computer. One of my closest friends had an ex-boyfriend who used to regularly hurl his Xbox controller at the screen and break it, which does not make for a happy home.

It's important to live with likeminded people who share your values, and if your housemate doesn't respect your views on swear words, it may mean you're incompatible as housemates. Do your other housemates agree that it's an issue? It may be worth having a chat as a house to discuss some boundaries around language and come to a conclusion as a group.

I asked Alex Rusby, a principal behavioural scientist at Influence at Work, for his advice on how to get your housemate to swear less.

"You don't need to convince your housemate that swearing is wrong to get them to swear less," he explains.

"Most people approach this problem backwards. They try to change someone's mind first and hope that, once the person is convinced of their point of view, their behaviour will follow.

"Your housemate sees it as normal to swear almost every time they open their mouth. You grew up rarely hearing it. Considering how far apart you are, it won't take long until you're just arguing about whether swearing is right or wrong, the heels dig in and you both become more entrenched in your views.

"Focus instead on securing one small change that moves you closer to the outcome you want. Consider asking your housemate to swear less in the places that affect you most, such as the living room. They should notice that conversations with you become a little easier and your friendship feels less strained.

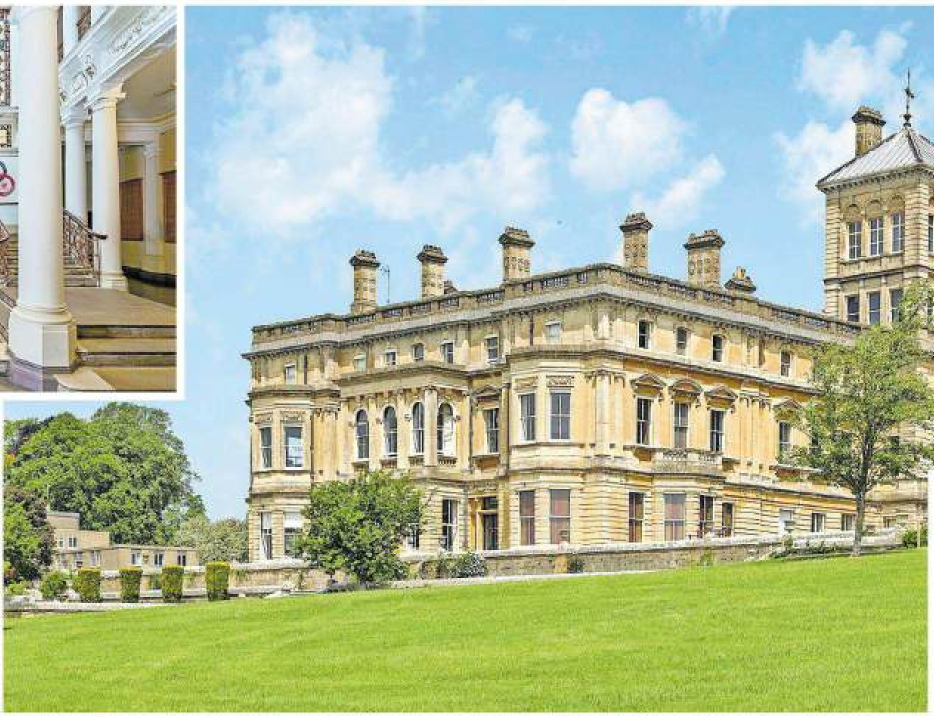
"It might not be the complete change you want but it's not trivial. Once someone starts behaving differently, they become more likely to act in ways that are consistent with that change. A flatmate who has agreed to swear less in a shared space is also more likely to swear less when you have friends over.

"Small, incremental changes can have a surprisingly large effect but it does take time, so be patient. Despite it being a change many people might consider reasonable, you are asking someone to alter something fundamental about themselves: how they communicate with the people around them.

"We tend to assume that to change someone's behaviour, we first need to change their mind. Often, it's the other way around. Behaviour changes first and the mind catches up.

"Focus not on convincing your housemate that swearing is wrong but on getting them to swear less over time. When you take this approach, you don't need to tell them about the benefits of not swearing because they will discover it themselves."

Got a query? Email sasha.nugara@the-times.co.uk



School's out — for ever

Rendcomb College in the Cotswolds is for sale for £20m-£30m — a victim of VAT on fees. But who would buy it? By Hugh Graham

Walking through Rendcomb College is a poignant and melancholy experience. Standing majestically on a hill in the picturesque Churn Valley in the Cotswolds, the grade II* listed Victorian mansion was an independent day and boarding school for the past century but it closed its doors in early July.

A sense of its recent past is palpable. Lesson plans for HG Wells's *The War of the Worlds* remain on the classroom whiteboard. Afternoon activity schedules still line the noticeboards in the creaky corridors, which are adorned with trophies and photographs of school sports teams. The head teacher's motto, still displayed on signs in the elegant panelled reception hall, is "Thoughtful, Ambitious, Adventurous".

The building feels frozen in time. But it's the end of an era for Rendcomb College, a sad turn of events for its 380 pupils, as the cost of living crisis hits private schools. The addition of VAT on school fees, which came in in January 2025, and the removal of the 80 per cent charitable business rates relief in April 2025 hit the school hard, along with the rise in energy costs.

The school lost 40 pupils between September 2024 and September 2025, a devastating blow to its finances, according to Richard Wills, a trustee of the Rendcomb Foundation and great-grandson of the philanthropist Frederick Noel Hamilton Wills, who founded the boarding school in 1918 to give talented boys from all backgrounds access to an exceptional education (it gradually incorporated day pupils and became fully co-ed in 1992).

The walls are lined with names of alumni. These include the champion jockey Richard Dunwoody, Kojo Annan (a businessman and son of former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan), the former Sainsbury's chairman David Tyler and the Paralympian shooter Issy Bailey. Seven hundred Old Rendcombians came to say goodbye to the school at an event in June.

With its hallowed halls empty, what will happen to the 32,000 sq ft Italianate mansion, with its five-storey tower, exquisite stained glass windows, ornate friezes, intricate cornices and Corinthian columns? Its 190,000 sq ft of outbuildings include about a dozen period residential properties including an old rectory and numerous staff cottages, plus a stable block, modern dormitories, a sports hall, a squash court, an old post office, a café and a £3.3 million theatre that opened in 2017. The 230 prime Cotswolds acres contain tennis courts, a cricket pitch, a rugby field, a deer park, a walled garden, formal gardens and woodland. The property, rechristened Rendcomb Park, is about to launch to the market with Knight Frank and pricing will be in the range of £20 million to £30 million.

Who would buy such an enormous mansion and its sprawling campus? Emma Cleugh, a partner at Knight Frank, says it is rare that an estate of this size and stature comes on the market in the Cotswolds. She thinks given the desirable location, about six miles from Cirencester, the natural buyer could be a luxury boutique hotel, a wellness spa or a private buyer with deep pockets. Developers who divide country houses into private flats or retirement homes are also common, but she says that private schools are increasingly sold off to other educational institutions such as continuing education colleges.

What to do with old private schools is a conundrum that will become increasingly common. Seventy-one private schools closed in 2025 in Britain, up from 58 in 2024; 15 have closed so far this year, according to the estate agency Hamptons.

That will make life interesting for Simon Vernon-Harcourt, design and planning director for City & Country, a developer that converts historic buildings into apartments. "I've been doing this for 20 years and people always ask if I'm going to run out of old buildings to convert but lots of really interesting listed buildings are coming up," he says.

In addition to the closure of private schools, many local authorities are downsizing from their listed buildings. "As a developer it's really exciting," Vernon-Harcourt says. "You have so much more soul, craftsmanship and character in a listed building than you'll ever get in a new-build."

Above: Rendcomb College in Gloucestershire is being put on the market. Below: ex-jockey Richard Dunwoody, a former pupil

But converting one of these is not easy, he says. "What you can do with them is a lot more limited than it was 30 or 40 years ago. They don't really work as retirement homes any more because those need level access and all sorts of modern facilities."

Converting them into flats within a grand country house would be the best solution, he says. They make for lovely apartments for downsizers with tall ceilings, big windows and a sense of grandeur, complemented by beautiful gardens that are communal and therefore less work than owning your own country house.

It's incredibly costly to convert these listed buildings so it has to be in a prime location to make the numbers work. If the subsequent apartment could sell for £400 to £500 per sq ft, he says it's worth doing. "It also depends on how pragmatic the planners are. We had one job and it took four years to get planning consent on. If someone's paying £20 million for that site and it takes four years to get planning consent, the interest charges on that £20 million will be huge. But if the sales values are good, then I'm sure it will stack up."

Darren Price works for Adam Architecture, which is in the midst of a £175 million restoration of Tottenham House, a former private school in a grade I listed mansion in Wiltshire. "You often have to deconstruct these buildings to put new services through," Price says. "You've got to lift floorboards, find ways of putting plumbing and electrics and green energy through the building without removing the atmosphere. It's incredibly complicated.

"The trick is to hide everything so that you're not losing that authenticity. I want the floorboards to still creak — I ask clients what level of creaking they want. I say, do you want to smell 150 years of fires as you walk into the hall, do you want to smell the books from the library?"

He thinks a promising use for these old private school buildings is as "longevity centres" — there is rising interest from investors in this sector. "They're like hotels but with upgraded medical facilities. You get your massages but also your blood tests and your IV and your stem cell injections, maybe dentistry at the same time."

Old Rendcombians might cringe at the thought but they can take comfort that the money from the sale will go to a good cause. The property is owned by the Rendcomb Foundation, a charity founded by the Wills family. The proceeds of the sale will go to the Farmington Institute, an educational charity that funds scholarships for teachers to undertake research as well as improvements to primary school libraries. The school may be gone but Rendcomb's legacy will endure.

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